STATE AND RELIGION:
THE CONFLICTS OF ULTRA-ORTHODOX JEWS IN ISRAEL

by

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Abstract

The thesis examines issues of religion and politics in Israel. The thesis is constructed around a critical reading of the literature written on the subject and an indepth first-person interviews with expatriates living in Ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel. After a careful presentation and examination of the various religious groups in Israel and their relationships with the state, the thesis offers a discussion on some of the many difficult issues Israeli society faces over the place of religion. More specifically, it explores the dynamics and processes of inclusion/exclusion of ultra-orthodox communities within / from the Israeli society. It looks at various policy sectors such as military service, housing, education and civil matters to see how the state has tried to find accomodations for Haredi people and how these latter have influenced and informed the ways public policies have been elaborated. It concludes that the historical statu quo on this question is no longer possible as witnessed in the last decade with growing tensions between various segments of the Israeli society. Therefore, the thesis proposes different scenarios to bridge the societal gaps between Haredi communities and the Israeli society.

Keywords

Israel, ultra-Orthodox, Haredi, politics and religion, political sociology, Haredim, religion in Israel, consociationalism,

Acknowledgments

Powering through writing this thesis has not been easy. In fact, almost two years after the interview, as I reread the following interview snippet, I see the exhaustion finally set in. This has been an exciting project; it helped me research something I have always been interested in, and perhaps get a degree of catharsis and closure.

> ***Interviewer:*** *Uh.*
> ***Respondent:*** *Did I say something wrong?*
> ***Interviewer:*** *No, I can't remember what I was going to say.*
> ***Respondent:*** *Oh, okay.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Yes. When you get to be my age things just start …*

I could not have even begun, let alone completed, this never-ending project without the help and support of my supervisor, family, friends, professors, research participants, and classmates. I am sure I am missing someone, so I apologize in advance; my brain just is not what it used to be. Thank you, Shira, for your support and patience; folding a shirt may not seem like much to you, but to me it's a sign of stability and home. Thank you for your love and support; we should have many years of equitable and egalitarian shirt-folding. Vanilla, you are the reason one of us wakes up in the morning, at night, and entertains during the day (good thing we do not sleep at the same time). You are a wonderful kid; thank you for making our lives that much more exciting. My parents and grandparents have been supportive (even if it was at times "when are you going to be done?") and helped me work out the complex issues that started during a walk around the moshav with my Dad and grew in form and complexity from there. Thank you for helping me work things out and try to come to terms with so many questions.

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General Introduction

The topic of this thesis is the role of ultra-Orthodox (*Haredi*) individuals in Israel. This is of particular importance as it examines a subset of the population that faces special challenges towards social integration. According to Reich (2000),

> the term "Haredi" ("God fearing," plural "Haredim") is usually used to describe the ultra-Orthodox Jewish religious community in Israel whose political interests are represented … While this community is generally non-Zionist in political orientation — believing that the full national renewal of the Jewish people must await the arrival of Messiah — most Haredim have come to terms with Zionism and have, to one degree or another, become integrated into modern Israeli society. (p. 159)

As in many other contexts where a group finds itself apart from society, both by choice and by historical changes, and lacks the power to make meaningful changes towards empowerment and stake a place in the larger society, the Haredi population has become marginalized over time. With recent changes in government policies and the social context, a new paradigm is emerging.

Examining the role of disenfranchised segments of society generally, and the Haredi situation in Israel in particular, is especially relevant since, as with many disenfranchised groups throughout the world, Haredim seek to gain or maintain a power base within the larger society while expecting respect for their unique character and beliefs. The manner in which Israel comes to address the unique situation of the Haredi community, not only in religious terms but globally, could have powerful repercussions for other disempowered groups seeking to gain parity. The gulf between religiously observant and secular people within the society has become ever more pronounced. In certain quarters, the statement by Durkheim that "the sacred and the profane have always and everywhere been conceived by the human mind as two distinct classes, as two worlds between which there is nothing in common" (1992, p. 120) now seems to describe the politics and social issues revolving around religion. As many of the changes discussed in this thesis are ongoing and continue to expand, looking at the various coping mechanisms and finding avenues to consolidate power for individuals as well as larger societal groups, are crucial for creating a blueprint for integration and, ultimately, the composition of a diverse, yet more egalitarian and equal society.

This issue has taken on more importance now than at any other point in the history of the state of Israel. Various milestones and compromises were reached in the past, but numerous socioeconomic, educational, and demographic factors have culminated in a situation where change is inevitable. Slow steps towards integration, building a larger power base, and creating political representation have taken on new meaning as these and many other factors have snowballed into what all recognize as a changing reality. This perspective was crystallized by Ephraim Lerner, an ultra-Orthodox expatriate university professor:

> *You know, in the United States you're expected—you're expected to, to make a living. Here [In Israel], it's kind of looked down upon. Oh, you make a living, you're one of these guys, you know. I met a guy in [the ultra-Orthodox town of] Bnei Brak who lives in Bar Ilan, and his kids were playing with the kids on the block, and they all called their father a profressor [sic]. He's a fressor [a glutton in Yiddish]. They couldn't say professor. Profressor, because he's teaching at a secular university. They couldn't even handle that. How do you—how do you be a Haredi—he had a long beard and a black hat and everything. It didn't mean anything because he's teaching at a secular school.* (2011)

In the past decade (2000–2010), there have been many changes in the way in which social assistance is granted and how various exemptions are seen not only by the secular majority of the country but also by the ultra-Orthodox minority itself. For perhaps the first time in the history of this young state, both sides agree on the inevitability of some sort of permanent compromise and the importance of integration going forward. At this critical juncture, this issue represents one of the most divisive cultural problems facing Israel today (Wagner, 2012, pp. 33–36), and a potential compromise or solution that suits the majority of Israeli citizens can have long-lasting and potentially extremely beneficial effects to society as a whole.

Parallels to the social issues at play in this specific instance can be seen in other social contexts outside Israel. A good example is the case study by Dick (2003, p. 324) that examines the Mennonite community in Western Canada in the early 20th century. The issues he discusses bear remarkable similarities to the topic at hand, and observations about the insiders who wish to communicate have clear parallels to the interview subjects in this study, located in contemporary Israel.

A number of elements in the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel have been in flux in recent years. Social assistance has been drastically reduced, and access to the wider society through mandatory military service, for which many ultra-Orthodox men in the past had received automatic exemptions when they were learning in *yeshiva*, have somewhat abated in favour of ultra-Orthodox military units. Completion of military service allowed improved access to the job market in Israel and to secular higher education. There has been a newfound

recognition by the government that policies of de facto exclusion, for a large segment of society, are a factor in creating massive social problems. An attempt to negotiate a more sensible understanding between the ultra-Orthodox segment of Israeli society and the secular one is a first crucial step to creating a situation in which all segments of society are enabled to flourish.

What Is This Thesis About?

This thesis touches on many interrelated issues, with the focus on the ultra-Orthodox segment of the population, known collectively in Hebrew as Haredim. Haredi society is examined from the perspective of social justice through research on the structure of ultra-Orthodox society and the various factors that have led to the present situation and the balance of power in Israeli society. Due to unique circumstances in Israel, many complications arise in examining a segment of society in the context of the involvement of state in religion, and to this end, many key questions in the modern state of Israel are touched on, such as the fundamental question of Jewish identity—the "Who Is a Jew?" debate.

This thesis examines the quandary of forming a progressive society while dealing with issues of assimilation of the religious minority versus the values, culture, and secularized religion of the majority. In particular, this thesis will examine how political processes can be used as a framework for understanding and reaching a dynamic equilibrium that acknowledges the many issues to be addressed by the wider society.

A critical element in moving forward lies in applying the research done in this study in order to see new dimensions in the various social and political problems facing the ultra-Orthodox minority and coming up with new ways of integration without assimilation. To that end, the research approach for this project looks at a minority within the minority group. This study terms "American-Haredi" or ultra-Orthodox expatriates—a group that has a liberal democratic perspective as a result of its exposure to the Western context in which state and religion coexist seemingly well. These expatriate insiders experience a more fundamentalist perspective of Judaism and at the same time have had experience with a more liberal political and social organization of religion. This is an important aspect, as the world of Orthodoxy in the relatively closed society in Israel has very different political and social pressures, demands, and requirements for its adherents than other Orthodox contexts in the Diaspora.

This thesis starts from a general look at the concepts behind the balance that Israeli society strives for to a historical and contemporary view of contentious issues among various religious and secular subgroups that have led to this point. From there, issues integral to moving forward and reaching accommodation are examined as well as future potential research questions.

Historical introduction and preliminary notes

In the early 19th century, the majority of Jews who lived in or came to Turkish (Ottoman Empire) Palestine were elderly, seeking to live their final years in a holy place (notably Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed), studying Torah. They were mainly poor, and many depended on charity; very few were secular. There were, of course, notable exceptions, including Sephardi families who engaged in trade and development (see Glass & Kark, 2007). By mid-century, there were rapid changes taking place, including the influx of European settlers and the first Protestant missionaries, and the arrival of European Jews who were fleeing persecution or were part of the Jewish national renewal (see Gilbar, 1990), and by the 1880s, a small Yemenite group who anticipated the arrival of the messiah (see Meir-Glitzenstein, 2011). By the end of the 19th century, the Jewish population of Palestine had come to include Jews who were Orthodox, ultra-Orthodox, and secular (see Ben-Arieh, 1989; Margalit, 1963).

The Turkish government in Palestine had to accommodate a number of religious bodies—mainly Muslims, but also a substantial and varied Christian population, Druze, and Jews. The Turks recognized religious communities (*millet*), which were given autonomy in personal status issues: marriage and divorce, burial, and in the case of Muslims, the specific Quranic rules about inheritance (Braude, 1982). These religious communities also had control of their community lands and buildings, charitable operations, and general finances. Millet comes from the Arabic *millah*, which means "nationality" (like the Russian natsionalnost; it implies membership in an ethnic-religious group (Persky & Berman, 2005)). Israeli ID applications included the category "nationality" up to 2005 (Carmi, 2007).

Speaking of "status quo" in modern Israel often refers to ways of dealing with religious issues that were initially established in Turkish times and then continued under the British Mandate and at the beginning of the state of Israel. The British appointed the first

Chief Rabbi of British Mandate Palestine (Raz & Wengrov, 1976), an institution that would later become the dual role of Chief Rabbi (Strum, 1989). Although the term "status quo" implies a static situation, the reality is rather different, in that the various religious communities have had to deal with demographic and historical changes over time, and the status quo has, in fact, been modified. The status quo shifts as new lines are drawn but remains a reflection of a historical perception, even if it is not strictly based in reality due to changing circumstances.

It is important to note the entry of the ultra-Orthodox community into the political sphere. Ultra-Orthodox Ashkenazi parties preceded the surprising organization and political victory from the Shas party, which lead to a renewal of Sephardi-Orthodox political influence and subsequent corruption (Kamil, 2001, p. 128-143; Lehmann & Siebzehner, 2007). This shift demonstrates a change in how social/political power is perceived, and the utilization of a particular population for political goals far differently. This is similar to the 1950s and 1960s, when many thought that civil war would erupt between the European and Mizrachi Jews (see Smooha, 1978; Rosenstein, 1981), but what happened was the entry of those Jews into mainstream political life. The "normalizing" of political relations between these ethnic origin groups took many decades, but now they have mostly reached parity. All this has implications for how the ultra-Orthodox can integrate into Israeli society.

The pressure the ultra-Orthodox community currently faces from secularizing forces stems from a number of sources. Not only is the population rapidly growing (far outpacing secular Israelis) (Landau, 2003; Manski & Mayshar, 2003), but a complex social system has been developed in the Israeli content to create a unique dependency never seen before in Jewish history. The results of these factors are a new complex reality, one with an intangible, yet spiritual, link to the historical past. With the rise of political engagement by the ultra-Orthodox community using their relatively small numbers to achieve voting bloc power, many factors drive the clash between the various segments of Israel's secular and religious groups.

A final note on the issue of gender is needed. While many of the subjects under discussion in the thesis relate to the male-dominated world of the yeshiva, there are many interesting aspects to the role of women in the ultra-Orthodox community. Half the interviews were conducted with women, and their perspective provides an interesting view of

the sheltered world of the ultra-Orthodox community. While gender certainly plays an important role in the communal dynamics of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel, it is unfortunately not examined as closely in this study as it relates to the political factors.

Research goal

The goal of the research is three-fold. First, it is to study the various ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel and identify some of the defining characteristics that make these groups unique. With a varied population and inexact statistics and other data such as the census, it is very difficult to know who exactly falls under the banner of the ultra-Orthodox community. In addition, different ultra-Orthodox subgroups may collaborate on certain religious or political issues and support certain community-wide standards, yet on other issues divisions and fractures exist. This is most obvious in the more extreme segments of the population. Within the various subgroups, one can find differing communal and social values and priorities, along with various trade-offs made within the ultra-Orthodox community in order to gain advantage or favour in specific areas. Finally, one must identify specific elements among the various ultra-Orthodox communities in order to understand the larger patterns at play within the wider ultra-Orthodox community in Israel.

The second research goal is to identify various ways in which the ultra-Orthodox community is both included within and excluded from the larger (and generally traditional-secular) Israeli society. Since the founding of the state of Israel, movements within the ultra-Orthodox have moved out of the public sphere, as well as having been excluded from both social and political spheres by the larger secular society. However, the modes of exclusion are not necessarily limited to a dual withdrawal from secular society. Many elements of Orthodoxy have become increasingly prevalent in the larger secular society. In the relationship between the public and private spheres, in effect, everyone in Israeli society is governed in his or her personal sphere by laws based in religion. This has become a topical and pressing issue. Elements of the ultra-Orthodox community withdraw from certain aspects of secular life while at the same time there is greater engagement with secular society in legally mandated personal sphere matters such as marriage, divorce, and burial. This process of withdrawn engagement has occurred with the ultra-Orthodox community in a number of ways from education to politics and national service to employment. How these elements

have shaped the ultra-Orthodox experience through various processes of inclusion and exclusion illustrates the present status of the community, with many complex interactions and influences.

The third research goal is to examine the political and social consequences of the current state of affairs, from the social structure of society and the wishes of the current secular majority, to elements enshrined in the basic laws such as religious freedom. This has become a critical issue and has taken on even greater dimensions as the outcome of these debates could lead to a fundamental change in the way in which certain contiguous issues are resolved. For example, reaching a decision on the fundamental nature of Judaism not necessarily based in the ultra-Orthodox rabbinical interpretation of the religion would have far-reaching consequences for Israel, which refers to itself as the Jewish state. What this might mean in terms of an individual or group's civil and legal status could be quite different from what is currently dictated by the ultra-Orthodox community. The underlying element of the political and social consequences for these various processes of involvement of the ultra-Orthodox community within society fundamentally relates to the relationship and entanglement of church or synagogue and state in the Israeli context. Thus an examination of the various aspects of political and social consequences that have developed through the present situation is critical to understanding how the ultra-Orthodox community can not only coexist but can also re-evaluate and adapt to a changing world, improving integration and communication for the future.

Research questions

The thesis has three primary research questions:

First, just who are the ultra-Orthodox? How are the ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel constituted? What are the various segments and issues that compose and divide the ultra-Orthodox community as well as determine their place in the overall social landscape of Israeli society?

Second, how are the ultra-Orthodox excluded from and included in Israeli society? There is a double process of exclusion and inclusion, with the ultra-Orthodox community at times choosing to participate and at other times excluding their members from participation in various aspects of Israeli society. At other times, this process is reversed, with the larger

Israeli society excluding or purposefully including members of the ultra-Orthodox community.

Third, what are the social, religious, and political consequences of the various elements of inclusion and exclusion for the future of the state of Israel and Israeli society? The process of exclusion and inclusion has a double mirror in which the ultra-Orthodox community at times includes or excludes itself from Israeli society by means of self-segregation. At other times, secular society chooses to exclude or variously include the ultra-Orthodox community in issues of national importance. A striking example of this process concerns the many government-provided, low-cost housing communities built throughout the country, which serve to segregate the population and prevent assimilation and integration. This is extensively to the satisfaction and wishes of the ultra-Orthodox community. Yet at the same time, elements of religious policy stemming from the entanglement of the ultra-Orthodox in state religious policy are part of the social contract by which each citizen of Israel must abide.

This is particularly prevalent in matters of the personal sphere, such as marriage, divorce, and burial, all of which are dictated by religious policy. Having influence not only at the bureaucratic level, but also, due to voting patterns and the fractured nature of Israeli politics, the ultra-Orthodox community at times has a great deal of power and disproportionate influence on many issues in relation to various social movements in Israeli society.

These elements all contribute to questioning the underlying process that currently mediates issues of contention along the fault lines of state and religion. The “status quo” agreements developed in the early days of the state in fact were designed to prevent conclusive solutions to various problems that would, by their very nature, favour one group above another, and put in place a system where forward progress seems unlikely to impossible. The mechanism, which is meant to balance the desires and needs of different groups, as well as the fundamental underpinnings and rationale for supporting various solutions to critical issues, has become increasingly important as demographic developments have consistently shifted towards an increased ultra-Orthodox population.

The Problematic and Aim of the Thesis

The status quo arrangement creates a political and social reality that is inherently unsustainable because it creates an environment of instability. By perpetuating in an unstable cycle, not only do issues not get addressed, but the entire system becomes unsustainable. With contentious issues being shifted from one level of government to another and with the courts for the most part unwilling to take a stance and alter the fundamental basis for coexistence among the disparate groups in Israeli society, profound changes and a new paradigm are needed to reconcile the various segments of Israeli society.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the underlying issues concerning the ultra-Orthodox minority in Israel and discuss various ways in which future resolutions of the tensions between secular and ultra-Orthodox may be managed. A solution that serves the interests of either extreme, ultra-Orthodox or ultra-secular, would simply be rejected. Various solutions such as consociationalism (Lijphart, 1977; Bolte, 2007; Lijphart 2008), which are currently in place, suppress rather than address the contentious issues facing religious society in Israel. By peeling back the layers and examining possible alternatives through the unique research approach of this study, new ideas and potential solutions will be uncovered and present real possibilities in terms of social reform and greater social justice and equality in Israeli society.

Thesis Statement

Broadly, the thesis will examine various aspects of state and religion in Israel and the intersection between secular and religious society. This takes on a number of forms, from the study of governmental authority and the courts in relation to the ultra-Orthodox segment of Israeli society to questions of social structure and organization. This boils down to an essential question of hegemony for the ultra-Orthodox community: Does the moral and literal authority in the state ultimately rest with rabbinic leadership, the state in the form of various government offices, the Supreme Court, or somewhere else?

This is a topical and relevant issue with many recent examples of the ongoing conflict between religion and state in the often complex and nuanced Israeli political scene. The thesis will examine three broad areas of research with overlapping importance. The first examines several recent clashes between the ultra-Orthodox segment of society and the government. The second will look at an extensive review of secondary sources dealing with

this particular issue in the Israeli context as well as state authority theoretical frameworks. Third, the thesis will use in-depth interviews with ultra-Orthodox individuals.

Alterman makes the case that a new political and social transformation is occurring in Israel within the ultra-Orthodox community:

> Increasingly influential are the Haredi-Orthodox Jews who purposely restrict themselves to their own enclaves within society [yet] … owing to their savvy exploitation of Israel's proportional-representation voting system, however, they are able to ensure a generous flow of funds into their schools and social programs. (2008, p. 13)

This creates a new social paradigm that is fundamentally unbalanced in favour of a new pattern of "traditional" Jewish life. The current status quo is a source of great social and political tension between the religious and secular communities in Israel.

Due to the requirement of military service in Israel, many ultra-Orthodox individuals who view service in the military as an affront to their way of life are essentially limited from participating in society. As discussed in previous work (Shapiro, 2010), many accommodations that attempted to mediate between the ultra-Orthodox segment of the population and the government, such as the Tal Law, proved to be essentially ineffective. The reality is that ultra-Orthodox men are faced with a difficult choice: to integrate into society, which in the ultra-Orthodox world is socially unacceptable, or to join the military and have access to higher education, a possible profession, and better options for employment. According to many in the ultra-Orthodox sphere, however, this simply removes one from participating in his community, a problem that extends beyond those of post-secondary yeshiva age. It is now a topical issue in primary school as a wholly religious curriculum is being taught in many ultra-Orthodox schools, leading to an entirely religious curriculum for high school education. The lack of "secular" studies, which would include more math, science, and language skills, precludes many from integrating into society later on, even should they choose to do so. This leads too many ultra-Orthodox feeling disenfranchised, and from the perspective of the secular government, there are many ultra-Orthodox individuals, perhaps a large percentage, who could easily integrate into society and work, if the requirement for military service were not a prerequisite to higher education and, in many instances, employment.

The government has proposed several measures, such as lowering the age of draft deferment from the current 35 years old or five children, to something like 24 years of age, which would allow a large group of individuals who wish to work to do so. Other proposals have included a shortened term of military service more appropriate to ultra-Orthodox conditions. An experimental unit has trained thousands of ultra-Orthodox individuals in a religious setting, so this approach is tenable although it does not necessarily coincide with the original secular intent of the military service as a means of integration into Israeli society. However, the military leadership has found that accommodation is important; if these individuals do not participate in some form of national service, and as a result, suffer exclusion from the broader society, they will not be able to maintain employment and contribute to the tax base of the country.

Following the Holocaust and the decimation of European Jewry, there was a large push to restore Torah learning and Judaism. In contrast to the European model in which the best and the brightest became rabbis, in post-Holocaust Haredi society in Israel, nearly everyone received the same education with the goal of making a generation of rabbis. Now, more than six decades later, the great problem is what to do with the large percentage of people unsuited for rabbinic training but with few other options for economic integration. Contributing to the situation are social pressures within the ultra-Orthodox community, the limited access to secular education, and other aspects to be addressed in this study. Thus, we find the central disagreement between the ultra-Orthodox population and the government: The ultra-Orthodox, as a percentage of the population excluded from the main elements of Israeli life, are nevertheless able to maintain an element of power through a large voting bloc, yet as individuals are underrepresented in government leadership and within the bureaucracy.

This situation creates a great degree of pressure to continue the status quo, including ultra-Orthodox control of the Education Ministry and the Rabbinate, with the vast majority of ultra-Orthodox individuals unable to attend secular universities or receive a standard education while maintaining their religious principles. This has essentially moved beyond an issue of cultural identity and assimilation to one of wholesale exclusion. Subsidies have been given to ultra-Orthodox individuals for full-time yeshiva learning. However, it is estimated that 40% of all ultra-Orthodox men who learn full time in yeshiva are, in fact, working illegally as they are not lawfully allowed to maintain employment without an exemption

from the army. Considering this finding, the Supreme Court of Israel decided to withhold funding or severely cut funding for yeshiva students following a challenge by a number of secular Israeli university students. The students maintained that since they attend secular higher education full time, much as the ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students learn Torah full time, they should also be entitled to a stipend from the government (Kershner, 2010, p. 1; Koretz, 1999, p. 30). Withholding such funding has created a great deal of tension between the ultra-Orthodox population and the civil government, and this represents only one of several serious issues.

Numerous studies have shown that the ultra-Orthodox population lacks leadership roles in society and generally does not participate in military or alternative national service. The long-term effect will be a demographic crisis in which it will be impossible to maintain increasingly large numbers of a population without access to higher education and a job market that demands proof of military or other national service (Kaufmann, 2011, p. xviii). Recent social experiments among the Haredi population, such as providing them with opportunities for social service, national service, and Nahal Haredi (the religious brigade in the army), have had some success, but because these programs have only attracted a small fraction of the overall ultra-Orthodox population, they have not completely accomplished the goal of full integration (Stadler et al., 2011, pp. 143–146). The government has announced that it plans to draft an additional 1,000 ultra-Orthodox individuals in successive years, although the overall number of yeshiva students receiving exemptions for full-time study is more than several hundred thousand. Nevertheless, it is crucial for the ultra-Orthodox, whether or not they choose to take advantage of the new opportunities, to maintain their identity and integrate only to an extent in order to maintain communal and cultural cohesion. More advanced job training at perhaps a younger age, combined with the societal expectation of marriage and the number of children the average ultra-Orthodox family has coupled with cuts in social assistance might well move the ultra-Orthodox segment of the population towards greater integration into Israeli society.

This thesis presents new insights into this topical issue and demonstrates that once an individual is given access and the tools to be included in the wider mixed society while maintaining his religious and social identity, the entire society can benefit.

Scope

The scope of this project is limited to events such as large-scale protests, social issues, and other aspects of interaction between state and religion, specifically those that occurred in the period leading up to and including 2009/2010. The issues examined relate to and had an impact on the ultra-Orthodox community in some way. This window takes into account events up to the end of 2010, making the research possible with a finite number of sources and text to analyze general overarching issues. While there are always new events occurring and twists to this ongoing story, the specific examples in this study provide insight into the general trends.

The project examines a major fault line in Israeli society. Conflicts between the ultra-Orthodox community and the very secular elements of Israeli society have been and continue to be issues of national concern. Occasional flare-ups in the ongoing debate between religion and state in the Israeli context will continue as long as the fundamental underlying issues are not addressed. In addition to recent newsworthy events, long-standing issues of importance are examined as well, such as the bureaucratization of religion, the combination of religion and state, and the religious control over personal sphere matters, among others.

During the course of work on this thesis through 2012, new loci of contention and strife erupted between the ultra-Orthodox minority or fringe elements of the ultra-Orthodox community and the larger Israeli society, both moderate Orthodox and secular. The latest series of social discontent concerning the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel from 2011 and 2012 are not included in this thesis. However, many of the underlying issues have not only remained the same but are equally important to understanding the move towards growing Orthodoxy on one hand and increased dialogue about the place of religion within the context of Israeli society on the other.

Chapter 1
Conceptual Framework and Methodology

In this context, we are examining the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel and the social element of this society. Durkheim pointed out that there is a collective social reality that transforms the individuals within and has a clear impact. In his examination of suicide, he concluded that a collective reality is at work to shape individuals' everyday lives. He states, "[b]ut it hardly seems possible to us, on the contrary, that there will not emerge from every page of this book, evidence that the individual is dominated by a moral reality which transcends him – collective reality" (Durkheim, 1985, p. 92). This can be seen in the ultra-Orthodox community, where social regulation and textual conformity form the backdrop of social life. From this point, layers of social norms and collective memory are added to create an all-encompassing way of life. This reality has a forward-looking outlook of continuity, a collective history, and an ever-reinforced and evolving social component, all the while insisting that it is simply unchanging.

When examining the ultra-Orthodox community, we can ask questions about basic demographics, makeup, political power, and so on, but an individual from the ultra-Orthodox community would surely point out that these are the wrong questions to ask. Depending on what your definition is, what measurements you are making, the possible permutations of who is included and excluded are endless. Perhaps one of the difficulties is where the data come from and who is asking the questions—spiritual dimension or otherwise. An interesting parallel is Durkheim's study of suicide and the social bonds of community and society that form around the notion of groups, superseding the dynamics of religious groups and forming something of a higher level. This has an interesting analogy in studying religion and policy in the Israeli context. As Durkheim points out, who gathers the data and classifies it can often have a marked effect on how it is interpreted:

> But, as Wagner commented long ago, what are taken to be statistics about suicide motives are in reality statistics about the opinions concerning such motives as held by officials, often minor ones, responsible for providing such statistical information. Unfortunately, as we are aware, official statements are often very faulty even when they refer to obvious material facts that are comprehensible to any conscientious observer and require nothing in the way of evaluation. How much more suspect must they be considered to be when they attempt not

> simply to record a completed act but to interpret and explain it! It is always a difficult problem to specify the cause of a phenomenon. The scholar requires all sorts of observations and experiments to resolve just one of these questions. Human volatility is the most complex of all phenomena. (Durkheim, 1992, p. 98)

This is a complex and dynamic problem to study, and coming up with exact answers is probably impossible. Examining the broad strokes of the data regarding the ultra-Orthodox community, however, reveals a detailed, fractured, and complex social dynamic. The commonalities among the ultra-Orthodox community, despite the many differences, are a uniting factor. Increased orthodoxy is seen as a way to preserve the traditions, history, and culture of a religion (or a religious group) set apart. Durkheim noted that uniting similarities are overwhelmingly more important than differences:

> What constitutes a society is the existence of a certain number of beliefs and practices common to all the faithful which are traditional and therefore obligatory. The more numerous and strong these collective states are, the more strongly integrated is the religious community, and the greater is preservative value. The particular details of dogma and rights are secondary. (Durkheim, 1992, p.102)

While this can be seen to a degree in Israeli society at large, there is no doubt that among the various ultra-Orthodox groups, there are many issues of collective agreement. This creates a common starting point when facing outwards towards secular society. There is a distinct difference in the way community and society is used in the thesis, reflecting the societal whole and an often fragmented perception by various groups. This distinction can be seen in Tonnies (2011) for example.

Durkheim's work on Jews

The situation with the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel today, and the responses to various external pressures on religious and social levels, has a very distinct parallel to Durkheim's examination of Jews during the Enlightenment. Circling the wagons around greater orthodoxy is not a new phenomenon, as "this also explains the case of Judaism. In fact, the criticism to which Jews have long been subjected to by Christianity has given arise

to feelings of exceptional solidarity among them" (1992, p. 102). External forces have historically acted to consolidate positions of orthodoxy among many religious groups. The religious context of separating the mundane from the spiritually elevated is also described:

> All known religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic: They presuppose a classification of all things, real and ideal, of which men think, in two classes or opposed groups, generally designed by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words *profane* and *sacred* (*profane* and *sacre*). This division of the world into two domains, the one containing all that is sacred, and the other all that is profane, is a distinctive trait of religious thought; the beliefs, myths, dogmas and legends are either representations or systems of representations which express the nature of sacred things, the virtues and powers which are attributed to them, or their relations with each other and with profane things. (Durkheim, 1992, p. 119)

Many of the nuances of the social organization and practices prevalent in the ultra-Orthodox community stem from these pressures. The minutiae of ritual life have developed as a result of these forces. Increased orthodoxy results from external pressures, and results in a contraction of the engagement the community has with outside secularizing influences.

> The ostracism to which they [Jews] are subjected is only one of the causes leading to this result; the very character of Jewish beliefs must make a large contribution to it. Like all early religions, in reality Judaism fundamentally consists of a set of practices that minutely govern all details of life and leave little latitude to individual judgments. (Durkheim, 1992, p. 102)

From both religious practice and a social reaction to preserving the image of a particular way of life, external forces, as in case of the subject discussed in the thesis, play a significant role in shaping social life and practice. Similar to the challenges of the Enlightenment, there is a wide world of secular influence which the ultra-Orthodox community feels pressured by in various measures. This can be seen in the social and performative aspects of religion (recalling (Goffman, 1959, p. 1-17)), as well as larger reaching social changes.

Consociationalism

Consociationalism is often associated with pioneers such as Arend Lijphart (1969, 1984) and Ivo Daalder (1984). Lijphart talks about maintaining a balance among various contentious segments of the population. This model has been extrapolated to many other circumstances from India to South Africa and Fiji (see Dew, 1976; Miline, 1975; Stiener, 1987; Talbot, 1996). Lijphart has written extensively about not necessarily trying to solve a particular issue but rather moving the issue through various levels of government or reaching accommodations. The accommodations ultimately do not solve the underlying conflict, yet they create a system in which society is able to move forward while not necessarily addressing fundamental issues through key elements of "accommodation, bargaining and reciprocity" (Caspersen, 2004, p. 570). This creates a framework of unaddressed issues and allows limited progress through a system of give and take. Even though a particular population may have certain rights and control taken away by dominant elements of society, it is still able to maintain, and possibly gain, elements that are important to it through a system of give and take. In the Israeli context, this is referred to as the status quo.

Consociationalism stands in stark contrast to the ideology of integration and assimilation. Rather, this allows each distinct group—in the Israeli context, each religious group—to maintain a strong identity while not necessarily having its identity overridden by a nationalist or larger-reaching identity. In this system, there are many inevitable trade-offs. However, real fundamental underlying change cannot be achieved as this would bring to the fore many contentious issues, which consociationalism aims to repress. Through the key contemporary contentious issues examined in this thesis, many examples are given of why consociationalism, though an ideal solution to perpetuating the status quo, is not necessarily conducive to having long-term stable progress and change.

B. Conceptual Framework

Consociational arrangements

The work of Arend Lijphart, a Dutch political scientist, speaks to the underlying situation of consociationalism (1969, 1984, 2008). It examines consociationalism in many contexts, and it is particularly apt in the context of Israel. "In a series of wide-ranging studies, Lijphart explains how consociationalism is adopted and practiced in polities where deep social and political cleavages threaten the institutions of public life with destabilization

and de-legitimization" (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 7). In many contentious issues, whether religious or social or public policies by one group or another, accommodations are made in order to pacify a particular segment of society in order to reach a majority consensus. Cohen and Susser explain that

> when consociational patterns are prevalent, societies with severe ideological, religious, and ethnic divides can, nonetheless, conduct their business civilly and sensibly ... consociationalism explains how deeply divided societies—societies we might otherwise think were politically doomed—can function reasonably well over long periods of time. (2000, p. 7)

Although Israel has many similarities in terms of multiple levels of government and political organization to other Western liberal democracies, the country is unique as it resembles more of a city-state since there are very little local politics. Rather, the majority of inhabitants live in large metropolitan areas and have primarily a national, rather than local or regional, affiliation. One of the key features of both pre-state Israel as well as contemporary Israel is that there is a great degree of consociational agreements among the various factions that compete for power.

> Consociational arrangements tend to thrive when the differences between a political system's constituent groups are so severe that allowing them to develop unchecked threatens to issue in unity-shattering crises, violent conflict, and even the disintegration of a political community. Consociationalism is, then, a method of organizing intercommunal relations so as to mitigate the effects of conflict. (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 7)

Consociationalism can be used to interpret the way in which the political and social organization of society seeks to maintain a balance without favouring one side above another. This way of looking at the internal forces on the status quo fits well in the Israeli context. Consociationalism and the way in which it balances various factors to maintain a constant state of compromise is not limited to the Jewish population in Israel, similar arrangements exist within the Druze and Israeli Arab communities as well (Dowty, 1999, pp. 175–177).

Considering the overall balance of the conflict, there is no question that during the past 60-odd years, there has been an increased movement towards secularism. Since the majority of citizens are secular, and in addition, many areas, such as the periphery in the

North and South, do not have a high percentage of religious population, it is, therefore, easier to implement secular policies, such as those relating to the Sabbath, without major repercussions. In the large metropolitan cities of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, changes relating to Sabbath observance (such as operating bus services or opening places of entertainment) have been controversial. Jerusalem has a large religiously observant population, while in Tel Aviv, although the majority is secular, the Sabbath issue is still seen as a major symbol of religious rights in the public sphere.

It is important to note that many of these religious issues do not have a place in the public sphere and are only paid lip service in the context of laws seeking to preserve a Jewish national identity. They are observed not on the basis of *Halacha* (Jewish law) but rather on the basis of consociational principles balancing the need for a general sense of Jewish-ness. For example, in many areas, holidays are often celebrated in a secular civic fashion rather than with any particular religious significance, particularly as most laws based on religious principles are not held to religious stringencies in terms of enforcement. This will be discussed in several cases later.

Israel has never had a majority government and often has to deal with very large and inclusive coalitions in order to govern effectively. This creates a situation, particularly since the development of involved political representation by the religious segment of society, where the larger secular society has been forced to address issues that would normally be outside their purview as they are in many other Western states. The separate educational system for religiously observant Jews, military deferments for yeshiva study, various funding issues, and religious policy are a few of the many examples of consociational arrangements, in which the status quo and balance of power are sought to be preserved in order to further overall progress by the majority coalition.

Since there is a scorched-earth principle in effect in which a particular segment can threaten to leave the coalition and bring down the government if, for example, it does not receive funding for its projects, minority parties can carry disproportionate weight within the coalition. Thus, religious parties are often included in very broad coalitions even when numerically they are not necessarily required for their formation; this is done in order to engage the religious parties in a consociational effort where certain elements are negotiated in exchange for meeting a balance with secular priorities. This relates to such matters as the

availability of public transportation on the Sabbath in Haifa and Be'er Sheva, unlike Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, where public transportation is not available. These more permissive cities are used as a liberalizing concession by the religious parties to enable them to pursue goals of greater importance from their perspective, such as the continuation of separate educational systems and various kinds of funding specific to their communities.

One of the key elements of consociationalism is changing the context of where arguments and disputes about these various issues take place. Often issues start at a local level, get moved to a national forum, and are often moved around even more to dissipate the focus on the issue. There is a great deal of effort is put into moving these issues into a bureaucratic administrative process or passing the issue from various levels of government until either the issue tires itself out or ultimately reaches the Knesset or the Supreme Court. Often, even at the highest levels, parties do not want to deal with these fundamental issues, and so they are used as bargaining chips in order to maintain the status quo in the context of other agreements. In this way, a form of balance and stasis is achieved.

However, as we will discuss in the section detailing the status quo, the overarching progress of religious society has been receding as religious society generally becomes more insular and, therefore, seeks more special interests and less general public measures than it has in the past. One of the key problems with this approach, as seen in various examples, is that although each group in consociationalism is able to form its own institutions and maintain a level of social independence, there are issues. A group may have, for example, separate communities, separate schools, separate funding, etc., and this presents an issue when conflict from the greater social compact and the implicit responsibilities of the state come into conflict with local sensitivities.

> Transforming incendiary confrontations of principle into technical, functional, local, or administrative arrangements is, therefore, a primary strategy of consociationalism.... The consociational style encourages the bureaucratization and localization of issues [where] issues appear to be more tractable, compromises are easier to come by, and, generally, a more practical problem-solving (rather than a bombastic ideological) style prevails. (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 12)

There is no more apparent example than the debate about military service, which is incumbent upon all Israeli citizens, yet through a system of deferrals, does not always

happen. In the case of certain religious sensibilities, such as the case involving school segregation, where one group's religious outlooks come into conflict with the larger society, the Supreme Court is required to intervene in order to maintain, if not return to, balance and then find an ideal solution that is acceptable to society as well as to the individual parties.

A consociational agreement removes a lot of the daily interaction among the various institutions, levels of government, and administrative bodies. Therefore, it allows these and other contentious issues to build to the point where once they come to the forefront and break, they become much larger, blown-out-of-proportion issues than they would be otherwise. The level of autonomy that exists among various institutions and the larger society is constantly susceptible to change, and the fundamental principle of finding an appropriate balance is often at odds with the stated goal of maintaining overall societal norms and at the same time respecting the principles and priorities of particular groups. “Separation promotes stability by allowing each community to lead its own life, develop its own institutions, and create its own leadership without the friction-generating intervention of contentious rivals” (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 15). This allows groups to operate independently without any one particular group seeking overall control. Rather, power is gained through strategic positioning in which the best stake can be claimed while giving up enough to avoid an all-out confrontation.

C. Methodology

Interview process

Following Ethics Board approval, interviews were conducted that outline the questions, purpose, and procedures of the research project. A number of issues were raised as part of the Ethics Board process. These were addressed, and an amended version was submitted prior to receiving approval for the project, as noted in the appendix. The procedure for interviews included a detailed explanation of the project, the use of the project data, signing confidentiality forms, and an explanation of the questions that would be asked using the standardized question script. Participants were asked if they understood everything and had any questions. If they did have questions, all questions would be answered to their satisfaction before proceeding with the interview. During the interview, a number of follow-up questions were asked in each section, and in all interviews, all questions were answered.

In the first phase, informed consent was explained to the research participants. The project was outlined, and it was explained that the data collection being undertaken was for use in the thesis and would only be used for this particular project. It was explained that all informed consent forms would be kept by the project's supervisor, and no identifying information would be used. The aspects of ethical implications, voluntary participation, risks and consequences, confidentiality, and an overview of the project were presented to each interview subject. This initial phase of each interview consisted of approximately 10 to 15 minutes in order to ensure that all participants understood the purpose of the interview.

All participants were asked to sign a form indicating their agreement to participate in the study and were given an additional copy of the informed consent form for their records. A number of participants asked either to see the results prior to dissemination or indicated they would like a copy of the study or both. In this case, they were asked to provide an email address where they could be contacted when those documents became available.

In order to ensure anonymity, each participant was asked a series of questions that were recorded on the interview script paper used in the interview. By doing this, an anonymous profile could be built, roughly based on a sketch of the demographic and biographical information of the interview subject. As the identity of the interviewee is unimportant and this information must remain confidential, interview subjects were reminded that the interview was focusing on their thoughts and opinions and were asked to consider their responses in light of identifying information to which they might inadvertently allude. Profiles with pseudonyms were based on name, age, sex, self-identification of Ashkenazi or Sephardic, and immigration experience. Finally, interview subjects were asked where their hometown is in Israel and how they would describe the community where they are currently living. From this information, a composite that reflects the bare facts of the interview subjects was created, using randomized names as well as slightly masked data without revealing exact specifics. For example, if someone mentioned that he or she had moved to Israel from Atlanta, Georgia, this information would be changed to the United States. Similarly, if someone stated his or her age as 32, this would be changed to early 30s. This was done to ensure that the data, while still being relatively accurate, could not be used in order to identify the participant. If an interview subject alluded in great detail to personal anecdotes, stories, or references that could be used to identify him or her, these were marked

while the interview progressed to enable further masking of the data once fully transcribed. In this way, the focus of the study—to examine the thoughts and attitudes of American Haredim—could proceed without compromising the individual's anonymity.

As there is a focus on American Haredi participants, demographic background plays a strong role. Likewise, a religious individual living in a mixed or secular town, though this is not the case in Israel, could potentially lead to a particular insight in the interview. In addition, the questions asked pertaining to immigration to Israel or being born in Israel speaks to perhaps different cultural influences from other places. There is a theoretical potential for interview subjects to have particular opinions linked not only to their experience in Israel, but also to their previous countries. As immigration is such a huge factor in Israel, with citizens literally coming from every country in the world, this could potentially speak to that issue.

Following the signing of a consent form, participants were asked specific questions to determine whether the individual grew up in Israel or had immigrated later in life. Based on the response, a number of questions—such as those pertaining to Israeli education—were eliminated. Several other questions during the course of the study were eliminated, and these will be noted elsewhere, as they seem irrelevant. A final point regarding anonymity is the question about whether participants had served in the military or another social service framework. This was eliminated as being irrelevant to, and perhaps coloring, the underlying focus of the interview.

The questions asked were generally in the order outlined in the document. However, two questions were asked out of order in order to establish a rapport and build up to the interview. As each question was asked, it was marked off on the sheet to ensure that no questions were missed, and if necessary, follow-up questions pursued a particular line of thought or returned the interview to the topic being discussed.

Interview questions

There were a number of considerations taken into account when writing the interview questions. How various questions would play out in the semi-structured format of the interviews (leaning towards a more structured approach) meant trying to discuss both the broad strokes of policy and religion, and at the same time discuss some of the personal

minutiae that made the perspectives of the interview participants so interesting. The direction of the interviews in the thesis takes both of these considerations into account, and this comes across in the interview excerpts.

Demographic information

The detailed in-depth interview consists of six main sections. The first is demographic information, and although the information will be changed, the interview will still reflect a generalized picture of the interview subject, as we discussed earlier, though not with enough data to identify that individual.

Religious beliefs

The second section talks about religious beliefs, feelings, and impressions associated with events involving state and religion, as well as social-religious beliefs. The section asks the interview subjects to identify the stream of Judaism they associate with. This creates a baseline as we are looking to interview Haredi or, as we differentiate, American Haredi subjects; other responses will, of course, be considered but may not be indicative of the overall direction we are attempting to pursue. The second question—How would you define your religious beliefs?—gets a more generalized picture of how the individual defines his or her beliefs, and that could possibly be extrapolated to a larger context of the questions being asked. Finally, under the religious beliefs section is the question: Do you associate yourself with a particular sect of Judaism? This again speaks to a nuanced association in which someone could belong to a particular group within the designated stream of Judaism. This could perhaps help to explain various opinions. Although the sample is certainly not representative, the in-depth interview does allow the potential for drawing limited conclusions in terms of how subjects associate themselves with a particular sect and their ensuing religious opinions.

The third part of this section, entitled “Social-Religious Beliefs,” asks three questions. The first: What does being “American-Haredi (English-speaking ultra-Orthodox)” mean? Interview subjects are asked to identify if they believe there is a particular subset of ultra-Orthodox Jews that identify as being American or English-speaking. This is crucial because perhaps there are, as discussed previously, nuanced differences between ultra-Orthodox individuals born in Israel and those who bring a particular mindset from other places. There

are also cultural integrative factors as well; those speaking English as their primary language will naturally gravitate towards one another among a group of Hebrew speakers.

While the beliefs of such an individual would be the same as the larger group, perhaps other aspects can be gleaned from the interview, and perhaps an interpretation of those values could shed light on some of the more crucial problems facing ultra-Orthodox society. Possibly this added perspective can create a more dynamic and in-depth view of the target population. The second question is: Do “American-Haredi” individuals reflect the reality of the Haredi world? This question speaks to the interview subjects' opinions whether individuals can maintain this dual identity. On the one hand, they maintain connections to the English-speaking world and have, as a result, a unique cultural and religious perspective, while on the other, they integrate and become part of a larger ultra-Orthodox society. How both sides view each other could again speak to the potential benefit of the interviewees and how particular aspects can be translated from one subgroup to another. The third question in this section—Are there advantages or disadvantages associated with being able to speak languages in the Haredi world?—again speaks to the idea of the subtle differences between entirely Hebrew-speaking ultra-Orthodox individuals and those who speak another language as well. Multilingualism can lead to inclusion or, on the flipside, exclusion or self-segregation. This can have an impact on the relevance of this particular subset of the population towards the larger Israeli ultra-Orthodox society but, as an internal sample, could be very indicative of issues and potential solutions proposed by this sub-segment of the ultra-Orthodox population.

Education

The next part of this section contains several questions regarding education. The first asks what type of primary education the participant received. This is particularly relevant as education is one of the integrating factors in Israeli society and, military service or the lack thereof, creates a major barrier to attending higher secular education. Primary education as a building block towards higher education is crucial. Many ultra-Orthodox institutions have decided to limit the amount of secular material students are taught from a very young age. This has a snowball effect on later secular learning, even if the military aspect is not an issue. This can also be indicative of the different subgroups we are analyzing, since perhaps

someone who is multilingual has been able to receive a higher level of secular education due to the bilingualism. This will again be a crucial determining factor in the overall study of integration as, for a very large part, integration relies on an educational path that ultimately ends in acquiring marketable skills in larger society.

The second question in this part asks what subjects were the focus of the participant's education, and this question speaks again to the particular aspects of one's education that are determinants in the successive levels of education, as an institutional policy as well as on an individual basis.

The third question is: Do you believe your education was sufficient? This asks interviewed subjects if they believe that their primary education, again, was sufficient for them to continue on their educational path, or if their education created a barrier towards integration in the future. This obviously balances cultural and religious subjects against secular subjects. Ultimately, finding a compromise between the ultra-Orthodox and secular segments of society relies on finding equilibrium between the use of these various subjects to create a well-rounded and in-depth education.

The next question continues in the progression of educational-based questions and asks: What type of post-primary education did you receive? This could be composed of various types of education, whether secular, religious, et cetera. The next question asks: Did you attend any other types of educational institutions such as higher-level religious institutions, university, college, vocational school, and so forth? This asks the respondents, all of whom are above the age of majority, to chart their educational progression and to recall any potential stumbling blocks such as military service or a lack of prerequisites to continue onto the next educational level. The question that follows asks: Do you feel you have additional educational opportunities available to you? This question speaks to the potential and ability of the interview subject to continue with his or her education, again keeping in mind the potential barriers through military service, social situation, cultural acceptance, et cetera, that could prevent or enable one to continue with education.

Finally, the last question in terms of education asks: How do you see yourself compared to the Haredi public? This asks for the interview subject's state of mind to relate how that individual sees his or her education in contrast to the wider ultra-Orthodox population in Israel and what that means. For the particular subset of the population we are

examining, this could have interesting repercussions in which there perhaps could be a bias towards a particular aspect of educational integration while maintaining bilingualism.

Political and social terminology

The next main section asks definitions of political and social terminology and personal opinion. This asks interview subjects to define and express how they feel about six particular terms. These terms were chosen for various reasons, as will be explained. The first is *Toratam Omanutam,* which literally means "Torah is their vocation," "Torah study is their vocation," and speaks to the concept that for some, higher education in religious subjects is a full-time vocation. How far this has gone is an issue of much debate that focuses on whether the system is broken and in need of fixing or operates perfectly within the guidelines created by the state. The second term that is to be defined is *self-governance,* which speaks to the compromises able to be made in integration. Naturally, giving up certain aspects of self-governance is a key component of integration in a larger context, and aspects of the sovereignty religious leaders have in, for example, Halacha, Jewish law, can come in conflict with civil law enacted by the government. Finding a compromise on such issues is a crucial component towards integration. The third term is *religious society*, how one sees religious society and how that individual defines it. The next term is *rabbinic authority*. Because of the combination of state and religion in Israel, rabbinic authority takes on both a legal and governmental role, in addition to individuals maintaining their own rabbinic guidance and counsel. How the interviewed subjects define and feel towards rabbinic authority is crucial to understanding how various aspects of cultural integration can be broached with the larger ultra-Orthodox society. The fifth term is *Halacha*, Jewish law. The last is *social assistance.* Social assistance is a cornerstone of many of the contentious decisions between the ultra-Orthodox and secular societies, each maintaining that it provides more benefit for the other. Defining the interviewed subjects' feelings towards social assistance is crucial to understanding the frame of mind of the ultra-Orthodox population.

State and religion

The following section asks interview subjects their impressions of recent events involving state and religion. There are four primary questions dealing with recently charged

political topics. The first group of questions relates to a situation in Jerusalem in which the local city government decided to keep parking lots open on the Sabbath and how the ultra-Orthodox responded. The second group of questions asks interviewed subjects their impressions of the state taking religious considerations into account when dealing with archaeology. Archaeology is a highly contentious issue in Israel as it often deals with human remains and how those remains are treated. The stringencies or leniencies that are followed by the government as determined in Halacha are often a major point of contention between the ultra-Orthodox population and the secular government. The third group of questions asks about a case of civil servants—social workers—getting involved in a suspected case of ultra-Orthodox child abuse and the ensuing problems. The fourth group asks about a recent Supreme Court decision regarding the desegregation of a publicly funded religious school in the town of Immanuel. In this situation, various factions claim that their religious beliefs were being pitted against the supremacy of the Supreme Court, and the ensuing compromises lend an interesting perspective on the potential to reach compromise in the future and speak to the ultra-Orthodox perception of the ultimate civil and religious authority in the state of Israel.

Social, state, military, and employment issues

The final part asks questions regarding social, state, military, and employment issues in four groups. The first group asks questions regarding religious identity in Israeli society and defining some of the social structures such as the centrality of marriage in ultra-Orthodox society as well as leadership roles and general perspectives on the outlook for social relations in Israel. The next group of questions asks general impressions of the state of Israel, and interview participants were asked to discuss how the state and Judaism are linked. They were then asked, given the state of affairs, if they think the present situation is viable in the long term plus other questions regarding religious freedoms and the overall ongoing controversy regarding the Orthodox community in Israel. The third group of questions in this section asks about military service and the opinion of the interviewees regarding mandatory military service in Israel, the potential effects that this policy can have on the ultra-Orthodox, and the interview subjects' opinions regarding programs specifically designed for the ultra-Orthodox community as an alternative to military service. Finally, the fourth grouping of questions

inquires about economic issues in Israel, such as the interview participants' opinions on the job market in Israel, and if there is a bias towards the ultra-Orthodox community or other issues in terms of access to education and the job market.

American Haredim

Using American Haredim for this research project presents numerous benefits and a perspective to understanding some of the fundamental issues that face the ultra-Orthodox community. There is a significant difference between ultra-Orthodox Jews in the United States and ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel. Ultra-Orthodox Jews in the United States are well-integrated, and many do not see a conflict between receiving an education and participating in society as a method of social advancement without impinging on the cohesion and character of their societies. As assimilation is an ever-growing threat, maintaining their cultural identity has taken on a role of prime importance.

Since interview participants have a detailed and nuanced perspective of the Haredi community in Israel, as well as the larger Haredi world view, the research data are able to shed light on many attitudes, beliefs, and values shared by the ultra-Orthodox community. The importance of using American Haredim is that for the most part, American Haredim, who are defined as being Israeli and Haredi, are expatriates of Western countries ranging from North America to Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. Dual perspectives not only allow issues affecting the Haredi community to be discussed, but also offer the point of view of those from liberal democracies. For example, the United States allows discussion of church and state issues in the context of Israel without reverting by default to religious-themed dialogue. While throughout the interviews, this did occasionally happen because the interviewees all had experience with religious rights in other contexts—they understand the separation of civil and religious issues—the perspective that they brought forth was very different from that an Israeli Haredi would have presented.

The interview participants, therefore, act as key informants with unique information pertaining to their current transplanted culture in society, and, at the same time, they are to some extent outside the main discourse in the Haredi community in Israel. As in many other contexts, many American Haredim have formed subsets of their community: Being American Haredi for many forms an alternate element of their personalities and informs their

experience in the larger Haredi community. The interviews are able to be generalized and help identify sentiments and discontent within larger Haredi society insofar as, in terms of religious ideology, interview participants shared many of the same concerns. By using this data source, a unique and introspective perspective will be able to be heard through the voices of the interview participants, and this allows for dialogue and discussion normally outside the sphere of acceptable dialogue within the strictly Israeli Haredi community.

For example, Eliezer Weiss discusses the perspective of an outside world of secularism in the Diaspora. This inside-outside view is quite different in the context of a small religious minority facing a far greater secular majority on the outside, as is the case in the Diaspora, from the situation in Israel where the outside is Jewish, yet markedly different in practice, belief, and observance. Thus, the permutations regarding religion are quite different.

> *In America things are— an American Haredi is much more open, he knows that there is a world outside of Torah—-It doesn't have to be right or wrong, but there is a world outside of him, okay? Where in Israel society is much more closed. ... If you know that there is a different world — that you're only part of the world, then you look at everything differently, even— so if you're in Israel and you're more open, then you know that there is such a thing as people who don't keep Torah and mitzvot. They're still Jewish, not everybody without a kippah is a goy.* (Interview with Eliezer Weiss, 2011)

D. Entering the Field

When I was preparing to start the research, I conducted a sample interview with a friend to work on the flow and rhythm of my interview technique. I found that some issues came up when discussing certain topics and felt that delving into sensitive topics regarding ultra-Orthodox life while wearing a knitted *kippah* was inappropriate. I normally wear a knitted kippah; in Israel, a particular kippah style has a nuanced meaning, and a knitted kippah is normally associated with Religious Zionism (for examples of this discussion relating to kippah and identity, see Cohen 2007; Grossman 2010; Steinhauer, 1990). Being perceived as a Religious Zionist was counter-productive to the initial test interview (even though I do not necessary share the fundamental ideology) and, therefore, I decided to “enter the field” wearing a baseball cap. I felt that this solution would shorten the time it took to explain myself to the interview participants and would not immediately cause them to “put up barriers” through a perception that I was doing this research to simply find flaws with their way of life.

I believe that this was effective to create a more "neutral" persona to conduct the interviews. In fact, one of the research participants asked me in no uncertain terms: “Why would a gentile be interested in researching Haredim?” Had I been wearing a kippah, I think I would have encountered a greater degree of hostility. On the other hand, had I chosen to wear a black velvet kippah, normally worn in Haredi society, I think many of the finer points that the interviewees explained to me would not be as detailed, as they would assume I already knew the answers and cultural context surrounding the questions I was asking. I would also consider the ethical implications of “dressing up” to play a particular part.

I prepared various technical elements in order to conduct the interviews for the research, such as an adequate supply of batteries or a box of tissues if one of the participants became emotional, as well as various writing supplies and my laptop—all the equipment that I would need for a full day of interviews. Since the interviews were for the most part carried out in a quiet downtown café in Jerusalem, the interviews were generally very convenient, and it was easy and accessible to break the ice before each interview by offering the interview subjects hot or cold drinks. While explaining the parameters of the project and the ethical considerations and obtaining consent, I was able to gauge a baseline from the participants and tried to understand a little bit about them and where they were coming from, so questions could be excluded from the interview, such as those regarding childhood education in Israel, if those were not applicable. This not only made the interview more focused and shorter, but it also helped keep the conversation on topic. Since I share a common identity to some extent with the interview participants, it was easy for me to understand the vernacular used in the interviews and to pick up on certain clues when the interview participants wished to elaborate on particular points, and I did so with follow-up questions from their responses. Throughout the process, I attempted to maintain a degree of detachment (Elias, 1987; Kilminster, 2004, pp. 25–36) in the process, and while interested in the responses of the interview participants, I saw my role as researcher and interviewer to prompt them to discuss particular issues posed by the interview questions and not necessarily to try to influence the interview subjects with my perspectives. This involved active listening; while the original questions were posed, we did not engage in a great deal of discussion, debate, and contextualization, so the participants were able to come to their own conclusions.

Often participants had no knowledge of a particular question or a particular aspect, and these were easily bypassed. Due to time constraints and the number of interviews conducted within the relatively short time of just more than a week, the interview time did not enable me to engage in extensive conversations regarding the background of particular issues and instances alluded to in the thesis. Through this process of trying to streamline interviews as well as maintaining active and interested listening within the process, a rhythm formed in the interviews that led to focus interviews with pointed follow-up questions as well when applicable. I believe that the overall tone and positive interaction through active listening and participation helped not only to focus the interviews but also to streamline and improve the process from my perspective as the researcher as well as from the interview participants' perspective. They were able to discuss the relevant and topical issues and to stay on point to discuss these particular issues and not have the interview devolve into other unrelated aspects.

Chapter 2
The Complexity of Jewish Groups in Israel

This chapter examines the various ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel and discusses some of the religious and cultural divides within the ultra-Orthodox community. Understanding what makes up the ultra-Orthodox community is paramount to this research project and is one of the three research questions. Due to the way the ultra-Orthodox community is organized, much is known about the presence of the ultra-Orthodox in Israeli society, comprising anywhere from 7% to 15% of the population according to various estimates. This is discussed in more detail in the section examining statistics and demographics, which includes some of the issues that make accurate measurement of the ultra-Orthodox community difficult to impossible.

Sociology offers the tools to study the closed world of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. Giddens states that "sociology is a social science having as its main focus the study of the social institutions brought into being by the industrial transformations of the past two or three centuries" (1982, p. 9). This can be seen in the dramatic changes that the Enlightenment brought, where new ways of countering secularism were sought (such as a strong return to Orthodoxy) (Alexander, 2011, p. 288), but these social changes were certainly influenced by the rapid transformation of society as a whole. The social impact of industrialization, and the changing social organization and patterns of life had a great impact on Ashkenazi Jews in Europe and ultimately led to many of the unique patterns of life in the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. Sociology offers the tools to study the wide-sweeping social changes on the macro level, to the specific contexts for social transformation on the micro level.

Due to strict voting patterns within the ultra-Orthodox community, there is often a disproportionate ultra-Orthodox say on certain issues that impact the community. This process of voting power is examined in greater depth in Chapters 3 and 4. In this chapter, the various groups are examined as well as the commonalities they share. While there is often agreement on various issues that affect the ultra-Orthodox community as a whole, for example, education and national service, there is also much dissension within the ultra-

Orthodox community on other issues**.** Examining who comprises the ultra-Orthodox communities plus some aspects of the social and political forces at play helps illustrate in broad strokes how the community is formed and what aspects it comprises. This chapter also focuses on divisions within the ultra-Orthodox community, ranging from disagreements on religious policy to the often uneasy relationship the ultra-Orthodox community has with the secular governments in terms of the religious bureaucracy. This examination looks at factors that bind and support the ultra-Orthodox communities as well as divisive elements in religious and public policy. This is applicable to the final section of Chapter 2 as well, which examines Zionism and the ultra-Orthodox community, which has both positive and negative elements reflective of the varied perspective the ultra-Orthodox community has towards Israel and involvement in the public sphere.

Overview

Although “millions of words have been printed to define and describe 'Israel' and 'Zionism,' but stripped to the very nakedness of meaning, Israel is simply the only independent state in the world where the adherents of the Jewish faith are in the numerical majority” (Glick, 1974, p. 108). While this generalization could be interpreted as the description for a relatively homogeneous society, nothing could be farther from the truth. Many cultural segments, religious factions, and a diverse social makeup comprise Israeli society. Encompassing several major religions, as well as being the spiritual home of Judaism, religion is a much-debated issue in society and a political focal point. The involvement of government in regulating religious affairs adds another complex dimension. The particular details of how the various religions are practiced, administered, and organized are issues of the utmost importance to citizens and coreligionists.

Religion is a pressing and ever-present issue on the Israeli social and political landscape. Reconciling differences among the various religions in Israel is a never-ending challenge. As there is no separation between church and state, politics and religion are often two sides of the same coin, which can pit religious sensibilities against political pragmatism or vice versa. The very basic element of religion, according to Durkheim, is

> a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden — beliefs and practices which unite into a single moral community ...

> The idea of religion is inseparable from that of the Church, it makes it clear that religion should be an eminently collective thing. (1992, p. 121)

This is indeed the case in Israel, where the organization and administration of religion has a social character.

The phenomenon of *Kibbutz Galuyot* or the "Ingathering of the Exiles" from the Jewish Diaspora also presents unique religious, political, and social challenges, as the pool of potential immigrants is immense. "Jews are known to reside in 121 countries, 82 of which have permanent organized communities" (Elazar, 1985, p. 276). In a country of ever-changing political realities, the

> establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the Jewish [polity] … began a constitutional change of revolutionary proportions, inaugurating a new epoch in Jewish constitutional history ... [as] the majority of the Jewish people were presented with the opportunity to attain citizenship in their own state. (Elazar, 1985, p. 259)

This by no means meant that Judaism in its traditional form was mandated or practiced by the Jewish majority. Rather, with the creation of the modern state of Israel, "a new Jewish civil religion [took] ... hold in modern Israel ... [a religious] reaction that was not contemplated by the pioneers of Zionism; the 1948 declaration of statehood artfully omits any explicit reference to God" (Grose, 1985, p. 43). A form of "passive Zionism" is "simply the ideology that postulates the historical, political, and religious reasons why that sovereign Jewish majority must reside in the land of Israel and no place else on earth" (Glick, 1974, p. 108). In the post-establishment state, this has resulted in a form of civil religion.

The religious practice involved became entrenched in society as "religious forms quickly found their way into public occasions.… [One example of this is] even the non-observant reaching for skullcaps as the Knesset reading of a Psalms commences" (Grose, 1985, p. 43). Perhaps this is an element of a unified "civil religion"—a unifying device used to connect and reconcile the differences among the varied Israeli populace. As Sharkansky points out,

> as the world's only Jewish country, Israel reflects the impact of its politics on Jewish beliefs and traditions developed over ... more than two millennia ... [including] the notion of the Chosen People and the belief that Israel is the land promised to the Jews by God. (1997, pp. 45–46)

Unifying these disparate elements through a secular state ideology utilizes grounding in a common religion to promote a shared vision of society.

Religion, as a function of government, garners extensive government supervision and support. The governmental supervision of religion extends to what can be termed the "personal sphere" of affairs. For example, the government of Israel funds both religious and secular educational institutions, with this funding extending to Jewish and non-Jewish schools. In addressing the divisions of religious practice, it is important to note that Orthodox Jewish law only applies to Jewish citizens of Israel through the administration of the Rabbinate, a government-appointed ministry. Other religions in Israel are managed through their various religious authorities, such as the Christian Church or the Muslim Waqf, who almost exclusively govern the practice and administration of their religions. While there are some exceptions, generally, religious authorities have a great deal of control and oversight when dealing with their coreligionists. The current system is a continuation of the millet system from the Ottoman Empire and gives a certain amount of autonomy to religious communities to govern their own affairs. This is the basis for the contemporary public/private divide of religious rights (see Englard, 1987; Bentwich, 1964; Goldstein, 1991).

There are several other contentious issues related to religion and religious freedom, such as the controversy regarding the Law of Return. The Law of Return, originally conceived in the pre-state British mandate, is the process whereby the government grants citizenship and residence to Jewish immigrants (Grose, 1985, p. 43; Smooha, 2002) on the basis of their religious affiliation. Recent decisions have shown that residency rights will not be granted to converts except in the case of "children of female converts who are born after the mother's conversion was complete" (Lipton, 2002, p. 41). This more closely follows the definition of matrilineal Jewish status as defined by the Israeli Rabbinate. This narrow definition is normally outside the operating parameters of other government ministries that govern immigration, such as the Absorption Ministry. It is important to note that similar to religious policy and control in the personal sphere, the Law of Return, which normally has wider criteria for determining who is Jewish and who is able to return, is still decided by stringent ultra-Orthodox policy.

Government policies on religion, as a result of ultra-Orthodox control of certain ministries as well as a strong political power base, lean towards policies mandated by

Orthodox Judaism, to the exclusion of other streams of Judaism. There are many such examples, indicative of a

> deep religious divide in [the] ... Jewish state where the secular and Orthodox have co-existed under a fragile "status quo" set of rules governing everyday life.... Under such guidelines, non-kosher restaurants flourish in Tel Aviv but there is no public bus service in the free-wheeling city on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. (Heller, 1993)

While there is religious freedom, certain aspects of religious policy are jealously controlled by a religious minority.

Generally self-segregated by choice in order to preserve their religious way of life, the ultra-Orthodox face numerous ongoing campaigns to integrate them into the larger society, often a slow, difficult process. The integration of ultra-religious citizens into the larger society "exposes them to the opportunities embodied in modernization and technology ... nevertheless, these influences do not ... [affect] religious belief or ritual observance, which continue to be rigorously kept" (Rebhun and Levy, 2006, p. 394). While ultra-Orthodox members of society seek to remain sheltered and tend to be religiously uncompromising, there are trends in other directions towards integration. Examples include such recent phenomena as ultra-Orthodox individuals joining the military, with a resultant change in and a gradual shifting of perception towards national service. Military or national service is the required entrée needed to gain access to the wider Israeli society. It is the path to employment, social integration, and one of the key experiences shared by nearly all citizens. The key point to stress is an ongoing campaign of integration rather than assimilation of religious individuals.

Secular Israelis are going through a cultural shift as well, as there has been movement towards understanding and integrating a "deeper connection to Jewish sources" (Rebhun and Levy, 2006, p. 394). This can be done in a wholly secular fashion, incorporating Jewish history and culture, rather than strict religious observance. Secular Israelis have noted that as society becomes more exposed to outside influences, and as the country becomes more concerned with materialism, there is a movement to counter the "rapid penetration of materialistic culture, which ... [is seen as a threat] to the spirit of Zionism and its values" (Rebhun and Levy, 2006, p. 394). It is of paramount importance to note that there are many opposing views of Zionism, which do not particularly incorporate religion.

> Traditional schools of Zionism asserted the Jewish identity in nationalism; the [Zionist] pioneers were typically social democratic, relegating religious observance to the realm of superstition.... They [found] the essence of Judaism not in Israeli nationalism alone, but in the religious expression of the Bible and the Talmud and the traditions that have developed over the centuries in the Jewish Diaspora. (Grose, 1985, p. 31)

With the rapidly changing dynamic of Zionism, social and religious facets of society are constantly changing. The balance of these factors and the perception society has of this reality in all segments of the population are constantly portrayed as important factors in Israeli politics and social discourse.

The religious landscape in Israel comprises various groups that include numerous minority religions with protected status recognized by the state. Primary religious groups are those of the Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Druze faiths, with a small percentage of citizens of Israel making up various religions such as Baha'i and others. The contributions of these various religions towards society as a whole take a pivotal role in both the ongoing discussion and debate within the democracy as to equal rights, funding, education, etc., and the general advancement of all citizens regardless of religion.

The terms “religious” and “traditional” in the Israeli context encompass extreme confusion in theory and are difficult to apply in practice. For the majority of Israelis who label themselves traditional, the word “‘traditional’ describes a group in the middle ... who follow many time-honoured Jewish practices as a matter of custom but are not devout or strict in a religious sense” (Dowty, 2001, p. 173). Exact statistics are not available on the religious landscape because the definition of one’s level of religious observance depends on how individuals define themselves. Because of this lack, it is difficult to gauge complex religious data in a tangible format, such as the census.

The primary step in analyzing the numbers of religious versus nonreligious people in Israel and the many shades of religious affiliation in-between requires detailed demographic data that are at best unreliable or simply unavailable. As observances are both a mixture of personal practice and bureaucracy, divisions are difficult to measure quantitatively. In fact, “a closer look at demographic data indicates that religious observance, by Orthodox definition, is at best holding the line. For this purpose the simple division into religious and non-religious ... does not adequately capture the range of practices” (Dowty, 2001, p. 173).

The situation is further complicated by the way in which religious observance is categorized by religious society, as well as by the larger secular population. “Most surveys for the Israeli religious observance use threefold self-categorization of ‘religious’ (*dati*), ‘traditional’ (*masorti*), or ‘secular’ (*hiloni* or *lo dati)* to describe the population” (Dowty, 2001, p. 173). These labels do not accurately describe the complex elements and nuanced particularities of religious observance and the corresponding social groups formed through mutual interest.

A unique facet of institutions in Israel is that there is a historical character to both the terminology and the references made in Israeli society regarding the various offices and ministries of the state. While there would normally be a close similarity across many nations that rely on a similar system, for example, parliamentary liberal democracies, in Israel these are given unique terms, which correspond to historical or biblically-linked institutions. This includes the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, and notably, the Rabbinate (Berman, 1999).

The modern state of Israel encompasses both the ancient and the new and must deal with the distinctions between a modern secular state with institutions developed and patterned after a progressive European model while integrating traditional, historical, and religious elements. Thus, it is an all-encompassing democracy that accepts and supports both religious and secular viewpoints, although the religious underpinnings of these institutions are interpreted very differently in the ultra-Orthodox community.

The ultra-Orthodox population

There are numerous descriptions of the religious demographic divisions within the Jewish population of Israel. While estimates do not deal with many smaller groups, they do provide a generalization of the various demographic factions. Some estimates approximate that 4.5% percent of the Jewish population is Haredi, one-third is traditional, and half are secular (Lipton, 2002, p. 38). According to Stadler et al., “the Haredi community now comprises between 6 and 10% of the Jewish population ... the two largest Haredi concentrations are in Mea Shearim (Jerusalem) and Bnei Brak” (2008, p. 219). Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics states that “the Haredim ... constitute 8% of Israel's population, or some 600,000–700,000 people. It is the fastest-growing segment in Israel” (Beck, 2010, p. 22). Wagner maintains that “where once ultra-Orthodox Jewry was merely a splinter group within

the minority of Israelis who identified themselves as religious rather than members of a secular majority, the 'black hat' Haredim have grown in terms of both absolute numbers and political influence in recent decades" (2010, p. 49). This is further complicated when some studies show that "twelve percent of Israelis define themselves as religious, 13% identify as traditional-religious, 25% as 'traditional-light,' and 42% as secular. Among religious Jews there can be found Zionists, non-Zionists, and anti-Zionists. None of these groups can be described simply" (Beck, 2010, p. 22). According to Koretz, "the [ultra-Orthodox in Israel] ... population growth, which doubles its numbers every 17 years, may bankrupt Israel's welfare system in a generation. Meanwhile, opposition to its privileges rises" (1999, p. 30). Moreover, "with birthrates three times the Israeli average, haredi influence is growing — increasing tensions. Only five percent of Israel's population in 1990, Haredim are expected to account for one in three Jewish children under age 14 by 2028" (Mitnick, 2010, p.1). This leads secular Israelis to question and worry about the impending demographic shift (see Berman, 2000). It seems that with Haredim as a small minority, social and religious issues are contentious, yet they still allow for compromise with the secular majority. Once the balance of demographic and political power shifts, the future seems much less certain to many secular Israelis.

The labels of *traditional* and *secular* are unique in the Israeli context in that "traditional Jews practice many Jewish traditions, but do not consider themselves religious … [and] secular Jews observe some Jewish religious traditions" (Lipton, 2002, p. 39), but are not traditional. The majority of religious Jews follow some form of practice, which is divided among many streams of Judaism such as Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Humanistic, feminist, and others. It is important to note that in Israel, the only officially recognized stream of Judaism is Orthodox, and government policy is set accordingly, although there are a number of exceptions. An additional 20% of the overall Israeli population is Arab. Of those, 80% percent is Muslim, 10% Christian, and 10% Druze (Lipton, 2002 pp. 39–40). As a society, "Israel is definitely not a melting pot society, but rather a mosaic made up of different population groups coexisting in the framework of a democratic state" (Fleischer & Gal, 2007, 62). This is indicative of the tensions among various religious authorities, as well as intra-group pressure to control the state-backed aspects of religious policy and legislation.

A more recent demographic survey puts the numbers at a total population of "6.4 million people in Israel, 77.8% are Jews, 17.3% are Arabs, and the remaining 4.9% are

Druze, Circassians, and others" (Fleischer & Gal, 2007, p. 61). Exact numbers on religious breakdown are often difficult to quantify as

> Israel has [a] high level of informal segregation patterns because of its current multiethnic, multicultural, multireligious, and multilingual populations ... [Although] there is no official policy separate sectors within the society are self segregating, maintaining their deep cultural, religious, ideological, and-or ethnic identities. (Fleischer & Gal, 2007, p. 61)

In addition, there are small Evangelical Christian and Jehovah's Witnesses communities throughout the country. A number of Christian missionary groups operate in Israel; while it is technically illegal to proselytize, these groups are generally tolerated.

Religious divisions

This thesis asks: Who are the ultra-Orthodox, and by extension, how is Israeli society composed? There are many implications to quantifying the subjects of this research: If there is, indeed, a pressing social or policy issue, how widespread is the problem, and how best to address it? Quantification of the population in Israel in terms of religious tendencies is difficult as "there is no simple way to determine how many Israeli Jews are secular or religious, or, among the religious, how many are Orthodox, ultra-Orthodox, or traditional" (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 155). The questions posed in the census are themselves inexact and subject to change, as religious observance can be nuanced and often does not fall neatly into the predefined categories above.

> There is a majority who consider themselves Jewish but secular. There are those who call themselves Modern Orthodox ... who feel their beliefs are not incompatible with modern life. Meanwhile, the ultra-Orthodox, known as Haredim in Hebrew, strictly follow Jewish laws and believe that much of modern life possesses a threat to their spirituality. (Devi, 2005, pp. 15–16)

Factoring in political and social issues not related to religion further obscures composition of religious leanings in Israeli society.

The research specifically looks at the Israeli context; however it is important to note that there are a significant number of Israelis, from across the religious spectrum, living outside of Israel (Ember & Ember et al., 2004, pp. 137–138). As statistics are generally

compiled only on residents of Israel when examining religious divisions within Israel, this issue of the Diaspora is not addressed here, but would be interesting to examine. The influences and interactions related to state and religion between the Diaspora and Israel are certainly present in various contexts; examining this relationship could reveal new directions for the study of religion in Israel.

Perceptions: the Haredi community

The ultra-Orthodox community at large portrays itself as the sole legitimate form of Judaism, with exclusive authority to adjudicate laws that, in its view, ought to be based on the ultra-Orthodox interpretation of Judaism. This perception is integral to the internal struggle within Israel over the sense of control and the ability of one particular group to influence government policy in terms of religion, as well as internal control over members of a particular religious community within the larger religious sphere. This also extends to the framing of the debate over the place, character, and nature of religion in Israeli society and control over the future of Judaism and the meaning of Judaism in the larger context as well. This movement towards control and the self-perception of ultimate legitimacy by the ultra-Orthodox community leads inevitably to a clash between the diverse elements of the religious spectrum and the decidedly secular camp. Secular advocates attempt to wrest control from the ultra-Orthodox community in order to control the "middle" of society, which is the largely traditional centre.

This ongoing push and pull can be analyzed in terms of the many small battles waged among the various sides, but the war on the whole must take into account the sensibilities of the large complacent middle that spans the spectrum of religious observance in Israeli society. This ongoing societal debate over control has interesting and far-reaching consequences not only within the context of the ultra-Orthodox community, but also with a myriad of other minority issues within Israeli society at large.

> The process through which a gradual societal shift is changing within the ultra-Orthodox community to strengthen their position and maintain longstanding traditionalism in a face of assimilation integration has two opposing processes taking place. The first is an ongoing withdrawal and constriction into the closed ultra-Orthodox community. This involves a retreat into a particular world view, re-entrenching the textual basis for communal life, strengthening values within members of the community, and gradually increasing the redirect

> used in relation to external potentially secularizing forces. The second, a diametrically opposite process, takes place where there is greater engagement with secular society, and this is done through utilization of the tools provided by the larger Israeli society to accomplish the goals of the community. This involves public funding for religious personnel, increasing the number of government-appointed religious figures, raising funding for political purposes through lobbying political organizations, and generally using the tools provided by the state to fully utilize the significant minority numbers the ultra-Orthodox community represents voting in harmony on numerous issues. … There is also … growing involvement of the Haredim in Israeli politics and their territorial expansion into previously non-Haredi environments, [which] has resulted in confrontations over living space and allocations of resources in the local and national sphere (Don-Yehiya, 1999, p. 93).

This leads to a disproportional influence on certain policies, particularly those concerned with public funding for ultra-Orthodox institutions and other factors. This process can be observed as inherently contradictory whereas the ultra-Orthodox community on one hand withdraws from the public in order to reinforce the moral and social dictates of the religion, yet on the other hand, seeks to entrench this position by using tools born in a secular ideology.

> The expanding influence and visibility of Haredism in such varied domains as education, philosophy, law, entertainment, and politics point to one of the most pervasive struggles for legitimacy and authority within contemporary Jewish public life, its source of knowledge and imagination, its bonds of affect, and its markets. (Stolow, 2010, p. 1)

This points to an interesting misconception regarding the ultra-Orthodox community in Israeli society as a whole in that for all parties, including the large disinterested centre, there is a symbiotic relationship between the ultra-Orthodox community and the various stakeholders in the state and religion debate. For the majority of Israelis, there is a certain degree of ambivalence and acquiescence that religion in some form is part of the Zionist state ethos though not necessarily something that is put into practice on a regular basis. Having someone in the country practicing what is perceived in the ultra-Orthodox community as the only legitimate version of Judaism, in fact, lends a degree of credibility to the secular state even if for the ultra-Orthodox their religious practices do not involve Zionist ideology. This

symbiotic relationship is perhaps a reflection of the uneasy balance of Zionism as a tool to support a secular state ideology that incorporates Judaism. Specifically, the day-to-day practice of Judaism is influenced to change the larger context of what it means to be Jewish and Israeli.

The ability of a secular majority, who could seek to free themselves of the ultra-Orthodox community completely, exists. They could be able to dictate to minority group policies reflecting an all-encompassing secular ideology. This is not done, however, because there is a degree of interdependence between secular Israelis and the ultra-Orthodox community, perhaps even the religious community at large, and each can stake a part in the Jewish state and its role in governing state and religious issues. Relegating religion to the private sphere would preclude the Jewish religious commonality, upon which Zionism seeks to expand in order to unite citizens from various backgrounds in the Diaspora into a common reality (or identity).

The process of the ultra-Orthodox community managing perception and determining their place in society involves give and take and the utilization of resources and privileges. At the same time, there is a redefinition underlying the fundamental premise of national service (as a major example) and the place that national service takes within society. The ultra-Orthodox community views its religious contributions of paramount importance and superior to the physical contributions of secular society in terms of national service. There is inherent conflict with secular Israelis that underlines the fundamental lack of understanding between the two camps. Understanding the centrality of religious versus secular aspects is a key aspect to understanding how differing opinions over the place of religion can be understood and interpreted. In many ways ultra-Orthodox thinking represents an ideal conception of Jewish society, perhaps not attainable even within that restricted community.

As noted, the ultra-Orthodox and secular segments engage in a struggle to control the placid and inactive middle in both corporal and spiritual matters, with important implications for the future of Israeli society. The basic identity of what it means to be Jewish and Israeli perhaps can be extrapolated to the fundamental meaning of contemporary Judaism in the Diaspora.

> Haredi and secular Israel are on a “collision course,” says Yossi Klein Halevi, a fellow at the non-partisan Shalom Hartman institute in Jerusalem, which focuses on Jewish affairs. “The

> situation is untenable. The ultra-Orthodox separate themselves from the rest of the Jewish people. They refuse to participate in the burden of defending the country. They insist on being subsidized for their separation and lack of participation," he says, adding that Israel is too preoccupied with the Arab conflict. "The ultra-Orthodox situation is a long-term existential crisis, but the Israeli attention span is dominated by short-term existential crises." (Mitnick, 2010, p. 1).

Ultimately, the perceptions that the ultra-Orthodox community has towards secular society, and vice versa, relate to the fundamental meaning of integration. How will integration fare in the face of the constant threat of assimilation? Are there significant impacts on the population and societal order by compromising or altering certain premises, such as the integration of the ultra-Orthodox community into the workforce while at the same time retaining religious values? This can be observed having been successfully done in other societies, such as the United States, and represents the unification of disparate values relating to the administration of religion and the freedom to practice and live in harmony with the larger society. This issue is seen on many levels from the individual integrating into the workforce, to national service, to the expansion of separate communities moving farther apart from the mainstream to create enclaves of coreligionists. All of these aspects lead to fundamental disharmony on the fault line of state and religion, and while there has been no clear victor emerging over the course of this disagreement, there is no question that the war being raged over the spiritual future of the state of Israel has great stakes for the religious and secular camps alike. With each side carefully calculating strategies and plotting the weaknesses of the various elements, there is a great deal of concern to win the war over the future of religion in terms of political, social, and public opinion and to balance these factors in order to gain support by the predominantly secular majority.

> In addition to the undue influence that many Israelis feel the Haredim hold in government, they are also aggravated by the fact that Haredim are extended full voting rights and social services while at the same time are exempt from military service. This particular issue has become a sticking point because compulsory military service is central to the life and identity of all secular Israelis. Most Israelis resent that the Haredim garner the benefits of a burgeoning economy and a strong military while contributing little to either. Ultra-religious Jews, on the other hand, feel that the majority of Israelis are not truly "Jewish" because they

> rejected traditional ways of life. As a result, relations between secular and ultra-religious Israelis have been characterized by hostility and mistrust. (Simon, 1998, p. 15)

Of the ultra-Orthodox community itself, however, there are numerous religious factions, groups, and sects, who vie for control on numerous fronts. Yet all maintain a commonality in their joint opposition to fundamentally altering their way of life and being swept up in the secular ethos of the state. They are, therefore, united on this particular front, and this could extend to other aspects of policy as well.

A. Who Are the Jewish Religious Groups?

This chapter deals with a number of issues relating to Jewish identity in contemporary Israeli society. Among them, issues such as Jewish identity, religious affiliation, recognition of various religious groups, the politics of religion, and government policies and implementation relating to the administration and the bureaucracy of religion are explored. These are complex issues because, at the fundamental level, “queries as to 'who is a Jew?' are in Israel largely a matter of who is a rabbi, and in a country where rabbis are paid by the state, that is an inherently political question whose outcome is determined by the results of the ballot box” (Wagner, 2010, p. 49). Politics and religion make the allegiance of Jewish Israelis fractious and complex. Examining a number of Jewish religious groups leads to the emergence of a more detailed picture of the contemporary religious landscape in Israel.

This section examines the roles of various segments and streams of Judaism, all of which form elements in the discussion about what religion means in the Israeli context and, indeed, argue as fundamental tenets of Jewish identity in the state of Israel. The ongoing debate about the spirit and rules of Judaism are, therefore, crucial not only to the religious segment of the population, but also to the entire society as long as everyone is governed by the same religious dictates translated into government policy.

Defining Jewish religious groups speaks to the fundamental underlying difficulty of reaching a definition (within the Israeli context) of who is a Jew. In Israel, this transcends the question of religious doctrine as it relates to the fundamental identity of an Israeli citizen. Indeed, citizenship, nationality, and religion speak to the very essence of identity. This concept will be explored in depth throughout the thesis. In short, a country that defines itself

as the Jewish state and delegates authority for religious matters as well as uses the government bureaucracy to police religious elements creates a system that is quite opposite from the American separation of church and state. Rather, in the Israeli context, this becomes not only an issue of conjoining synagogue and state but also a charged political issue. The definition and acceptance of various religious groups in Israel are differentiated to a greater degree than in the Diaspora because of the authoritative administrative powers religious groups receive in Israel through the administration of state religion.

1. Sects and segments

This section examines various sects and segments in religious Israeli society and provides details on various facets of each to provide a broad picture of the various factions involved in religious society and politics.

Haredim

There are many differences among the various groups of Haredim in Israel and various factions within those groups as well. This pertains both to differences within religious factions themselves as well as with ultra-Orthodox communities in the Diaspora. Although the ultra-Orthodox community may at times present itself as a homogeneous entity—this can be a factor with similar modes of dress and action—many divisive factions regularly differ on politics, religious doctrine, interpretation of religious texts, and many other issues. Ravitzky explains that

> Haredi Jewry is composed of many diverse factions each of which differ[s] significantly from the others: Hasidim as against Mitnaggedim; Lubavitcher Hasidim as against those of Belz; Agudat Israel as against the Jerusalem Edah Haredit—each loyal to its own path and each with its own rabbi (and one may include among these also the followers of the Shas—the Sephardic Torah Observant). (1996, p. 146)

Nevertheless, many commonalities are shared among most groups, including a fundamental understanding of how religious texts are interpreted and a particular, organized pattern of social life. For example,

> a basic Jewish belief maintained by the haredi community is that the Torah ("Law") given to Moses comprises the "Written Law" (the first five books of the Bible) and the "Oral Law," or

> the explanation of the Written Law as relayed over the years by Jewish scholars and compiled in the Talmud around the year 500. (OECD, 2010, p. 167)

Generally, among many Haredi groups in Israel, the power structure is that of a top-down institution: Religious leaders interpret texts to give meaning to decisions based on how to live in a contemporary setting as well as to answer problematic issues relating to religious observance on all levels, from the personal sphere to that of the larger society. "The Torah is considered authoritative and to provide a set of codes ('Halacha') on what to do in almost every imaginable circumstance" (OECD, 2010, p. 167). However, as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) goes on to explain, "By its very nature, human interpretation of the Law differs, and within haredi groups, rabbis or rabbinical authorities have the final say on the practical interpretation of Halacha" (2010, p. 167). Many groups are led by their religious leaders on matters both religious and secular, often consulting on issues of religious policy with others in a chain-of-command-like structure, as well as consulting with the religious political leadership who seek guidance from leading rabbis from their organizations on what the correct and religiously prescribed direction is to follow. "For public policies to be effective, it is thus important to convince rabbinical authorities" (OECD, 2010, p. 167). Utilizing these avenues of control is the best strategy to connect with a population largely out of touch with traditional forms of media and advertising.

However, it is important to note that although at times Haredi society, particularly if looked at as a snapshot in the contemporary social experience, can be viewed as a stagnant environment, there is, nevertheless, a great deal of change and shifting priorities in order to adapt to meet new challenges from assimilation, secularism, and the outside world. This has become more pronounced in the Israeli context as the outsiders, those who present a very different reality from the ultra-Orthodox community, speak a common language, share many common values, and, indeed, a common religion. Bridging the gap between this type of secularization is, therefore, is perceived as an even greater challenge to the ultra-Orthodox hierarchy.

In order to meet changing social and political pressures, a great deal of change has occurred to incorporate religious dictates and policies into new social adaptations. Examples

of this phenomenon are varied and include many religious decisions to incorporate the unique aspects of Jewish observance in the land of Israel, such as controversies about the proper procedures for the sabbatical year among ultra-Orthodox Jews. The ultra-Orthodox community faces many challenges in terms of integration and modernization within the context of Israeli society, such as various aspects of the creation of the state, modern technology, etc. It is important to note that many decisions made by rabbinic leadership have incorporated technological or other advances within the framework of existing texts and reconciled new paradigms of social coexistence with these factors; yet, at the same time, they have rejected many perceived dangerous outside elements that would have great secularizing or assimilative components.

The fundamental patterns of life and organization have stayed the same for many ultra-Orthodox Jews and their communities in Israel. Various cities built as ultra-Orthodox housing projects maintain elements of this lifestyle. This is due to social and political developments in Israel and also to a familiar style of existence that recalls many facets of life in a previous era, such as living in an all ultra-Orthodox community with rabbinic leadership consulted on the most mundane of matters in order to create a religious society without external influences, at least on an interpersonal level.

> In Brooklyn, Paris or London's Stamford Hill, the Haredim are ... a harmless reminder of life in Europe's vanished *shtetls*. At Israel's founding, the State's political leaders looked upon them in much the same condescending way.... [Following] the Holocaust, the new State's founders were in no mood for a confrontation with them. Why should the energetic young Israel care if small group of Jews wanted to dress and behave as if they were still in their medieval ghettos? In time, it was assumed, the Haredim would surrender to modernity and blend in with everyone else. (*A Nation of Tribes*, 1998)

In an interview, Yitzhak Cohen stated that he

> *view[s] ultra-Orthodox … as a group of Orthodox religious Jews [who] about 250 years ago ... began observing their Judaism [differently]. They had a leader who they followed to—every single thing that they do. They took their Judaism to, I would say, a little bit beyond—a different level where they dress differently—they try to take certain aspects of Judaism a little bit more seriously. They follow their leaders to the utmost degree, a lot more than other observant Jews, where they will even dress the same way and follow the customs that might not even be as important—they'll follow everything to the nth degree. And they live much more secluded lives. They try to, as much as possible, to shield themselves and their family from the outside world.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

When asked about the difference between Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox, Cohen went on to say:

> *For the most part, [the difference between] Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox is a lot in terms of appearance. I think that when it comes down to it, most of the religious observant—and when I say most, I mean like, probably 80–90% of the activities that Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox are doing in their daily lives, are very similar. Perhaps the only difference that I would say, besides their appearance in terms of how they wear their hair, and how they dress, and certain activities ... that are only appearance-wise, like their wives shaving their head, and things like that, is perhaps, the ultra-Orthodox spend their days studying Torah, all day long, every day—or, almost all of them, especially in Israel.... They spend their entire days learning. I would say, probably 80–90% of the ultra-Orthodox are like that, whereas, just Orthodox, without the ultra ... most of them, probably, work, and that's how they support their family.* (Ibid.)

Through their rejection of elements of modernity and integration, many Haredim see Religious Zionism as a direct threat to their way of life. They see the combination of Zionism with religious belief as being fundamentally incompatible, and often the priorities of the ultra-Orthodox community are very different from those of Religious Zionists who partake in various state institutions and see progress through integration. “Haredim ... have an attitude towards Zionism that ranges from passive acquiescence to outright hostility. Such hostility extends to modern Orthodoxy, a branch of Judaism that has enthusiastically embraced Zionism” (Wagner, 2010, p. 49).

The interpretation of texts by rabbinic leaders is a practical approach that speaks to the social organization of everyday life and various questions that arise. From daily life to political and social organization to the very highest level of politics, rabbinic leaders are consulted to ensure proper following of religious tenets as interpreted from religious texts and provide a social template by which adherents live their lives with the hope of leading an ideal lifestyle based in the values of Jewish law.

While throughout this thesis, and indeed in common usage in Israel and the Diaspora, the term Haredi is used homogeneously, Haredi society is in fact composed of many segments, often on very different ends of the Haredi spectrum in terms of core beliefs, organizational structure, and priorities. For example,

> at first glance many people tend to group all Haredi Jews into one category, that of “black hats.” However, a closer look at the Haredi world shows it to be a multifaceted society, at times supra-geographical, at other times with marked differences between similar Haredi

> communities in different countries, and even between different Haredi communities in the same country. (Baumel, 2003, p. 91)

To generalize, Haredi society is organized as a top-down administration, in which leaders of society, who are the most renowned rabbis for an individual sect, act as leaders in spiritual and religious matters and often in secular political matters, as well. “Haredi movements are organized from a pinnacle downward, the pinnacle being the *da'at Torah*, the unchallengeable theoretical-theological religious wisdom regarding a specific wisdom as it is expounded by a given movement's undisputed religious (and often political too) leader” (Baumel, 2002, p. 161). While there are many differences among the various Haredi groups, including numerous localized traditions and unique aspects of individual Haredi segments, faith, culture, and society, there are many elements that transcend group differences and apply to larger groups and form an interconnected network throughout the Diaspora to other Haredi communities outside Israel. According to Gopin,

> ultra-Orthodox Jews, including Hasidim, today embrace as isolated a position from the non-Orthodox world as possible; [for example, in issues such as] the use of secular education only for the purpose of making a living, if at all; a literal belief in revelation from Sinai, and a much greater dependency on *halakhic* or spiritual leaders to determine the contours of their lives and choices....The lines of who is and who is not Haredi [are] blurry at the edges, with people defining themselves in various ways at the border of all Jewish affiliations. (2002, p. 231)

Haredi society in Israel must often compromise on internal divisions on many issues in order to gain political strength through a unified stance in the Haredi world. Many of the examples discussed in this thesis, such as large-scale protests, are not necessarily the work of one particular Haredi sect or another. Rather, they are issues that have an across-the-board appeal, and, as will be discussed in terms of political power, many issues are discussed among Haredi leaders, and they present a unified front even though their individual sects within the Haredi movement may be at loggerheads due to internal strife or divisions.

The present incarnation of Haredi society generally reflects a degree of Orthodoxy mirroring that of Orthodoxy in Europe.

> Haredi society as we know it today first emerged in the aftermath of a rapidly industrializing, urbanizing, and nationalizing European modernity, within its ensuing regimes of voluntary association and political fractionalization and its expanding realms of economic opportunity and cultural choice. (Stolow, 2010, p. 46)

Furthermore, Stolow continues:

> Like any movement that defines itself as an orthodoxy, Haredi-ism was never a static expression of tradition. Rather, it was a product of [often cataclysmic] social change, precipitating the very need for efforts to systematize, ideologically sharpen, and institutionally reorganize the conditions under which one could claim to uphold Jewish thought, practice, and moral outlook. It is possible to identify historical precedence of religious stringency and asceticism and the Jewish tradition going back to antiquity. (2010, p. 46)

Though contemporary Haredim do not necessarily reflect Orthodoxy throughout Jewish history, there is an element of Orthodoxy that has played a dynamic role in countering perceived or real pressure and threats from external secularism, assimilation, or the weakening of religious and societal values. Haredi society is based to a great degree on textual knowledge as well as that of interpretation, ranging from rabbinic interpretation of the key elements in the scripture down to minute guides to the organization and accepted practices in everyday life. Contemporary rabbinic interpretation on many issues varies in particular sects, yet there is a great deal of agreement for reasons of religious or political expediency stemming from the perceived threat from the secular majority in Israel, which often seeks to enforce or determine religious policy through legislative values.

An interesting facet of Haredi society is identity management, where a particular way of life has been developed in terms of social organization and living and is practiced by many in society. This development comes through a set of perceived goals for society, and these goals are sought through adherence to custom, practice, religious dictates, and many other extra-textual interpretations of religious dictates. While the underlying basis for many of these dictates comes from religious textual interpretations, numerous social and other elements have developed out of the various experiences of ultra-Orthodoxy through the generations. “Israel's Haredim ... created a religious culture more insular and controlled than

had ever existed in Jewish history. A single kind of personality — the preternaturally pious, diligent, and the ascetic Torah scholars — became the ideal that everyone was meant to emulate" (Odenheimer, 2007, pp. 86–87). The perceived goals of the ultra-Orthodox community are in many ways concerned with the various milestone life events that cement membership and belonging in the larger social group. Among the various facets of these milestones is an overarching goal of creating a society of Torah scholars and imbuing various personality traits in the population. These goals are obviously far-reaching and realistically unattainable for each and every individual, yet are commendable ideals for which to strive, creating a template for a singular personality type. According to Shaffir,

> the focus on identity management and social control are also captured through an examination of status passages including matchmaking, betrothal, wedding, and death. Such matters do not simply concern individuals undergoing the experience, and by observing how they handle such transitions in their lives, we observe how the community exercises power to define and ratify changes in the individual status. (1993, p. 460)

Even though on the surface it would appear that there is not a great deal of engagement with secular society at large in the public sphere and that there is a relatively stable and unchanging identity, there are, in fact, many vectors for public discourse and information, and this is apparent in the world of public and private advertising in Haredi society. For example, in the ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood of Mea Shearim in Jerusalem, posters and other signs are affixed throughout the neighbourhood about events, notifications, ideological controversies, and so forth. "A public face of the Haredim ... is analyzed through ... their posters' text and subtext. In addition to signaling rivalries and varying perspectives in the community, they also serve as markers identifying appropriate and unacceptable behavior" (Shaffir, 1993, p. 460). In a society in which some do not read newspapers and others read only newspapers presented by their particular faction or group, the publicizing of information in this manner in the public sphere makes the Haredi world very sensitive to political and social change happening around them. Even though Haredim are generally not perceived to be involved in the secular affairs of the state or society at large on a practical day-to-day basis, this can be interpreted both politically as well as an ongoing apparent sensitivity to many issues, such as "adapting to environmental, political, and social

circumstances, and acting on opportunities which their particular configuration offers" (Shaffir, 1993, p. 460).

Ultra-Orthodox life in Israel generally takes the form of a socially constructed template for Haredi life. There are various complex social codes in which conformity of dress, actions, behaviour, gender roles, and religious observance are of the utmost importance. These codes are organized into both the public and private facets of Haredi life in terms of observance as well as social performative norms. Adherence to these strict social codes creates additional pressure to self-segregate to be able to form a society where these precepts and codes can be observed without extraneous pressure from secular society.

> Haredi[m] may identify with various traditions related to geographic locations … or philosophical orientation such as Hassidism——a more spiritual approach to Judaism.... [S]ome outward manifestations, however, are common to all Haredim, including modes of dress that are modest and tend to be uniform, particularly for males; relatively specific gender role expectations; central values of marriage and large families; strict prohibition of male-female physical contact before marriage, and explicit rules governing contact after marriage; daily prayer and study, more communal for men than for women; living in Haredi neighbourhoods and, wherever possible, making use of exclusively Haredi communal institutions. (Ribner, 2003, p. 54)

Through this process of self-segregation from secular society, the ultra-Orthodox community is faced with a dilemma in terms of public funding for institutions. It is not desirable or even practical to segregate completely from secular society as a whole. Rather, moving to distinctly ultra-Orthodox neighbourhoods and seeking to establish ultra-Orthodox institutions, such as schools and those involved in social welfare, are all methods of removing any elements that could have an unwanted influence on ultra-Orthodox life. Yet this process comes back to underlying issues related to funding, where the very act of self-exclusion is required to be funded by secular society, which may not agree with the underlying moral and value judgments being made and the reasons for self-segregation. This dilemma speaks to the fundamental underlying conflict, where on religious, social, and political issues, the two sides—religious and secular society—are simultaneously moving apart and coming back together. This arrangement, as discussed later with regard to the status quo, is untenable and presents severe demographic and social problems for the future.

Haredim and Zionists have long had a difficult history. Since the beginning of the state, there was and still is a great deal of uncertainty about how to include a social group that leads a lifestyle that hearkens back to the norms of the European shtetl. One of the issues involved in discussing Haredim is that "the lines of who and who is not Haredi is blurry at the edges, with people defining themselves in various ways at the border of all Jewish affiliations" (Gopin, 2002, p. 231). Indeed, there are many influences that Haredim experience in terms of the political/social reality in Israel. How Zionism fits into this can be examined from many different angles.

From one perspective, one of the fundamental differences between Zionist thinking and that of Haredim is in the paradigm of prayer versus action. Haredim believe that morals and purity are a more critical facet than delving into an issue and understanding, or at least attempting to understand, and therefore to do the right thing in God's overall plan. Taking overt action and trying to control destiny, as Haredim understand the Zionists are attempting, is the antithesis of the Haredi outlook. To the Haredim, Zionism denies the spiritual element of man's character and relies solely on the physical plane in interpreting reality.

Haredi attitudes range from pro-Zionism to ambivalence to rigid anti-Zionism, though it is important to note that attitudes continue to change as many of the social and political issues discussed in this thesis are becoming less of a theological debate and more a matter of practical social expediency.

Within the Haredi community, there are various components to ultra-Orthodox belief of the Torah, or law, and how it fits together with the practical social application in day-to-day life, starting with the written law and the oral law. The written law is the Five Books of Moses and other original texts (on which Judaism developed); and the oral law, comprising the discussions of early rabbinic authorities culminating in the Mishna and the Talmud. As a whole, these works are viewed collectively as the foundation of Halacha, or Jewish law, and prescribe both an extensive legal code as well as practical living and fundamentally represent one particular true path (see Weisbard, 1990; Cooper, 1987; Sagi, 2007 for various aspects of this). Through time, arguments and disagreements about the various methods of implementation and the interpretations that sages and scholars have given in previous works throughout the years, led to the system of Halacha, many facets of which are open to

interpretation, as arguments on various points may have continued over hundreds of years, and which has historically given a certain flexibility to Jewish practice.

According to the organization of Haredi society, questions of fundamental importance about practice or theoretical aspects of Halacha, and even those at a lower, mundane, everyday living level, are asked of various rabbis arranged on a religious basis unofficially in a hierarchy. In this hierarchy, each successive rabbi, from the community leader to the sage of the generation, will have someone to consult as the particular issue warrants. This system also has a parallel in the organization of the government-sponsored rabbinate, which is in charge of Jewish affairs insofar as state issues and religion intersect. In contemporary Haredi society, typically men will continue to study Halacha, including recent decisions and contemporary issues in Judaism as well as ancient texts, in a formula of studying, reviewing, and advancing religious information. “Their central social institution is the yeshiva, where male students study and interpret the Talmud (oral law), the only subject that males are allowed to study” (Drory, 2009, p. 163). At the same time, women in the society will generally tend to be the breadwinners and go outside the home, or even outside the community, to work (Benor, 2012, pp.10–11; United Nations, 2009, pp. 408–409; Stadler, 2009, p.120). The gender division of labour has an interesting and significant impact on the roles of individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community.

Because of the top-down structure, social change comes through the structured hierarchy of rabbinic leadership and experience. This is apparent in all four cases discussed in this thesis where state and religion, or the power imbalance between religiosity and secularism, come into contact. Through a consultative process with religious leaders, many social problems can be avoided, and this could present one aspect of the way forward.

It is important to note that Haredim, when dealing with the secular majority, do not necessarily take a passive role in promoting and defending religious interests. In contrast, there is a generally apathetic attitude towards religion by society at large, which means that the ultra-Orthodox not only have a great deal of hegemony in religious matters, but this can also lead to “further radicalization of the fundamentalist-religious camp” (Sheffer, 1997, pp. 122–123). As a result, trying to influence civic matters on a national scale, particularly as they relate to matters of religious importance to Haredi society, is often at loggerheads with

the particular focus on maintaining control, funding, and low interference from secular society.

Ultra-Orthodox society in the Israeli context has generally tended to separate itself from secular society in a form of self-exclusion. This happens for a number of reasons, such as avoiding assimilation and integration in what the ultra-Orthodox community views as a secular majority losing fundamental traditional religious values. At the same time, there are other processes at work, such as an institutionalized exclusion through various processes, as will be discussed in the context of academia and military service, in which two opposite forces contribute to the ultra-Orthodox community at large pulling back from secular society. "[Haredim] are considered anti-Zionist and irrelevant to Israel's development.... By choosing to live in 'ghettos' of coreligionists, Israel's Haredim have been marginalized in virtually all civic matters" (Drory, 2009, p. 163). Liebman explains further:

> These religious communities have become increasingly insular for a variety of reasons. They now possess the resources and the talent to satisfy the demands of their adherents in realms of culture where, only two or three decades ago, religious influences were not to be found. Secular Judaism, once a lively component of Israeli culture, is now moribund. To put it another way, if one is raised as a religious Jew and continues to harbor strong commitments to the Jewish past, one has nowhere to go outside of the religious community. (1998, p. 408)

Who are the Haredim?

It is important to note that the majority of the religious community, divided as it may be, works in concert with the government and secular society on the social and political front. The religious community as a whole seeks partnerships in order to, among other things, forge a greater degree of autonomy and allow for various social arrangements, as discussed in the section relating to the status quo. These arrangements provide for religious sensitivities extending beyond the personal sphere to become elements in considering new policy decisions. This extends to many areas discussed in this thesis, such as education, social work, integration, military service, etc. While there are clearly various forms of interpretation and engagement with the wider Israeli society, the underlying tensions are unique to this social context.

Because some Haredim are considered anti-Zionist and, therefore, are excluded from the national process as Haredi society often focuses on special interests related more directly

to their society, these perceptions create a very difficult impasse to breach on both sides in terms of integration and accountability to larger social and political issues. The following sections detail some of these challenges with the larger secular society, as well as identify various divisions within the ultra-Orthodox community. Even though collectively there can be a great deal of social and political power wielded by the ultra-Orthodox community, when this willingness to address certain issues is divided on various points, it creates a difficult situation of diluted social and political power, as well as lack of a clear consensus towards the various issues. "[The ultra-Orthodox or Haredi sector] has launched a major offensive to promote its interests. Both leaders and rank-and-file ... regard this offensive as successful, and this perception has led to further radicalization of the fundamentalist-religious camp as a whole" (Sheffer, 1997, pp. 122–123). The vying for power in both political and monetary aspects is critical to the ultra-Orthodox community in order to maintain its ideology and way of life. In other words, there is a great deal that must be done in order to preserve the status quo.

It is essential to clarify that the fundamental issues relating to Haredi society, culture, and organization are not characterized by an anti-Zionist approach, though this does feature in small minority factions among the ultra-Orthodox, such as the Neturei Karta. These groups do not participate in the political process, and their ability to influence public policy is, therefore, very limited. In this particular case, groups that are overtly anti-Zionist seek to maintain an even greater degree of autonomy than requested by the remainder of the ultra-Orthodox community, such as a separate education system, but go even further not to accept funding from the state and privately fund all their communal institutions.

Haredi society presents itself with links to history in an unbroken chain. The current organization of society envisions itself to be a direct descendant of previous generations going back to biblical times (OECD, 2010, p.167). This perception is difficult to reconcile with contemporary orthodoxy found in Israel today, as many facets of the contemporary ultra-Orthodox community are historical and social responses to increased orthodoxy. Haredi society is based on organizing principles and religious practices that emerged in the Ashkenazi European Diaspora and various party politics or lack thereof preceding the formation of the state of Israel. "Within the ultra-Orthodox community there are…groups following different rabbis and traditions…according to their European Ashkenazi or Eastern Sephardi origins. There is also a gamut of different political views,

ranging from nationalistic to even anti-Zionist" (Devi, 2005, pp. 15–16). Nonetheless, the current organization, formation, and top-down approach of Haredi society on matters of religious doctrine as well as political and social issues have a great effect on members of the ultra-Orthodox community, and while organizationally, their society may not represent that of biblical times, spiritually, many believe that there is a clear connection to the underlying fundamental context of the ultra-Orthodox experience. Baumel describes the origin of the term *Haredi:*

> Although the term [Haredi] is biblical [from Isaiah 66:5], its contemporary use began only during the latter half of the 20th Century. Initially utilized by speakers of Hebrew to denote any Jew who is punctilious about his Jewish practice, the term gradually came to designate those Jews whose style in life, worldview, ethos and beliefs went beyond what many people seem to understand by "Orthodox." (2003, p. 91)

The concept of Orthodoxy can be perceived as a response to various historical periods in which assimilation and a process of secularization provided constant pressure on maintaining a discrete Jewish and observant identity. As various movements arose and sought to change the primary experience, various modifications were made to counteract these forms of social mutation. This constant process of trying to reach homeostasis through observance of religious doctrine, cultural nuances, and the various factors in which society is internally governed has become increasingly complicated. With the involvement of an official state religion (in which religious practices, laws, and customs become translated into bureaucratic missives and governmental decisions) that often does not reflect the letter of Jewish law, but rather the spirit, the compromises made and the religious elements acceptable to society are increasingly complex. This fight for the very soul of the Jewish experience is fundamental to the Haredi way of life in Israel and is expressed through many avenues by maintaining a degree of religious control of the personal sphere through bureaucracy, voting power, and other means. Dowty explains further:

> Haredim are "fundamentalists" … [with] "a … a strategy, or a set of strategies, by which beleaguered believers attempt to preserve their distinct identity as a people or a group." This involves the selected retrieval of "fundamentals" from a sacred past and their use as a bulwark against the dislocations of modernization. It is … an innovative re[-]creation of a political and social order characterized by authoritarian leadership, strong discipline, a

> rigorous moral code, clear boundaries, and an identified enemy. All these elements appear in Haredi society, whose roots go back over two centuries to Jewish resistance in the Enlightenment and the prospect of integration into European culture. (2001, p. 164)

According to de Lange, fundamentalism is a

> term of Christian origin but now extended to other religions, designating a disposition to interpret texts literally and treat them as infallible. Jewish fundamentalists maintain an unquestioning in the divine source and inerrancy not just of the Biblical teachings but of the oral law as well.... This belief is characteristic both of modern Orthodoxy and of traditionalism. Fundamentalists typically turn their backs on manifestations of modernism and secularism, and believe that the world can be saved from these dangers by the maintenance of an ancient faith of which they are the custodians. (2008, p. 111)

This takes many different forms, but an ongoing retreat to what is perceived as traditional values and patterns of life has been taking place among ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel.

Haredi society is not necessarily a cohesive unified front in either politics or social terms. While outwardly there may be similar, though non-identical modes of dress or political leanings, there are many internal divisions and factions competing along the same lines. It is important to note, though, that many of these groups do share a great deal in common and often compromise on political and social matters for the greater good. Decisions by one group can reflect a negative pressure against the ultra-Orthodox community as a whole, and this is taken as an affront to many groups that generally would not necessarily be involved in these issues. This extends as well to internal divisions within various groups, which often for reasons of internal politics, practice, customs, etc., are at loggerheads with each other about the proper ways that one practices religion and the cultural elements that go along with this degree of religiosity. Nevertheless, “this movement promotes stringent interpretations of Jewish law, intensive study of Jewish texts, and submission to the authority of a narrowly defined rabbinic elite” (Stolow, 2010, p.1). Beck notes that “while the term Haredi ... appears in the Bible (... Isaiah 66:5 and Ezra 10:3), its modern political use can be traced to the 1920s, when the Agudat Yisrael was founded in Poland to counteract the secular-Zionist movement. Participants in this countermovement

were called the Haredim" (2010, p. 22). This new utilization of the word has connected the ancient contextual meaning with the new social-religious phenomenon.

Historically, particularly leading up to the creation of the state of Israel, and during the Holocaust period, for example, ultra-Orthodoxy was viewed as outmoded and failing, particularly in light of the great secularization forces at play in the prewar era. Upon the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948, many viewed ultra-Orthodoxy as merely a response to secularizing pressures and maintained that in the context of the new Israeli reality, they would no longer feel threatened and would soon integrate and assimilate into secular society. In fact,

> most secular Israelis assumed that the Haredi way of life was disappearing and looked on the Haredi neighborhoods of Jerusalem and B'nei Brak as living museums to be visited before they vanished entirely.... [T]he experience in Eastern Europe and Palestine before the Holocaust had been one of rampant assimilation. Few of [the] children, it was felt, would resist the pull of the modern world. [Thus], it was easy to be tolerant and even generous in granting Haredi demands [such as] military exemption for yeshiva students [and] funding for their separate educational networks. (Dowty, 2001, p. 179)

However, the exact opposite has been true, and Haredi society has undergone revitalization and renewal in ultra-Orthodox social and cultural life in Israel. Though statistics are not exact, ultra-Orthodox Jews, as well as Israeli Arabs, are two of the fastest growing segments of the Israeli population. There are various factors attributed to this, but overall there is no question that ultra-Orthodox life continues to flourish in Israel. Many of the social issues surrounding this increase in demographics have either not been addressed or have been set aside in favour of status quo style arrangements, and this has led to increased pressures and various challenges in society. Through the thesis, these issues will be explored, and possible solutions discussed.

It is interesting to note the influence of Ashkenazi Haredim and many of their experiences in Europe that have translated into elements of cultural identity on the Sephardi Haredi population. Many religious Sephardim identify with the predominantly Ashkenazi Haredim, despite a degree of backlash to cultural and religious homogenization. This process can be distinguished through the advent and increased power of the Shas party, a Sephardic ultra-Orthodox political party with Haredi overtones. While this movement has sought to

establish a unique Sephardi religious identity, many ultra-Orthodox Sephardim maintain the trappings and outward appearance of Ashkenazi Haredi culture.

This is important as many Sephardim, who maintain a more easygoing and indeed a more congenial relationship with those outside their immediate sphere of influence and with secular society as a whole. These cultural vectors are very important in understanding the overall Haredi society and its disparate influences, particularly when it comes to inter-factional politics within Haredi society. According to de Lange,

> the Haredi movement unites Chasidim and Mitnaggedim, despite their historic divisions. Haredim affect a distinct style of dress; the men wear beards and side locks and black coats and hats, while married women have shaven heads, covered by a wig or headscarf, wear modest clothing that hides most of their bodies. Haredim in Israel are increasingly violent in their hostility to modernizing trends, particularly to secular Zionism. (2008, p. 53)

While this description is perhaps too specific and identifies merely a subset of the Haredi population, Caplan points out, that for some segments of Haredim, "'Western culture' is associated with a large number of historical events, personalities and processes that are perceived negatively ... the Jewish enlightenment movement (Haskalah), the rise of Reform Judaism, secularization, Zionism, and the more recent trends of assimilation and intermarriage" (2006, p. 272). Orthodoxy presents a pattern that casts a far wider net than mere external appearance. It is a response and a reaction to perceived threats and a contraction inward towards age-old and familiar values and culture, often taken to an extreme.

The question when one studies religion in Israel, particularly religious groups or subgroups such as the Haredim, is to define who comprises the group and to look at particular statistics or data regarding population levels. This is particularly difficult in the context of Israel as the census does not necessarily pinpoint specific membership in religious subgroups; rather, the census merely asks if one identifies as being religious. In Israel, approximately 85% of the population identifies itself as being traditional, as observing some elements of Halacha, or Jewish law, and not others. Approximately 15% of the Israeli population represents itself as being religious, although it is difficult to quantify this, as it may be, depending on the religious criteria used, as high as 30% or as low as 10% to 15%. These numbers have recently ranged from 10% to 28% in one recent poll (Arian & Shamir,

2011, p. 284). In terms of numbers, "the Israeli ultra-Orthodox population in Israel did in fact double in size between 1979 and 1995, from about 140,000 to 290,000, and is on track to double again by 2011" (Berman, 2009, p. 89). How the varying degrees of religiosity across the spectrum of Israeli Orthodoxy relate to the study of Haredim, of a subsection of ultra-Orthodox Jews, is difficult to determine. According to Ravitzky,

> as a generic term ... "Haredi Jewry" may be artificially and only valid from the perspective of the outside observer who sees surface manifestations, but not the underlying conflicts of philosophy and outlook. This problem certainly presents itself when we consider the variety of Haredi attitudes towards the existence, laws, mores, and activities of the sovereign Jewish state in the current (i.e., pre-messianic) era. That issue stands at the center of a sharp conflict within the Haredi community.... [Therefore,] we must begin with a question, what common characteristics do these groups in fact share? (1996, p. 146)

Even more so, unlike many other demographic values of the overall population, religion cannot be divided on ethnic lines, such as Ashkenazim or Sephardim, or indeed on socioeconomic or other lines, as the Haredi subsection of the population has members in many of these different movements. There has been an ongoing trend towards greater religiosity in the European tradition by many Sephardim, such as members of Shas, and this skews the ability to pinpoint who are Haredim and to approximate their numbers.

Generally, it is assumed that Haredim number approximately 10% of the overall Israeli population; they have a greatly expanding birthrate, leading to a future increase in relative population. Many of the laws and issues discussed in this thesis take into account the sensibilities of both ends of the population: the Haredim on one side looking for increased recognition by the state and hegemony over their internal affairs, and on the other, secular society, which as the majority, seeks to maintain a balance between religion and the state. The Haredim represent a visible minority, and, while they can be clearly identified, there are many subsections, streams, and sects within the overall general movement. Nevertheless, many members are interested in the same direction of religiosity; this is reflected in the major religious parties who, due to their large demographic numbers and by using strict party voting, are able to overcome largely apathetic secular voters divided by many factious parties. Caplan notes that

> Haredim, like other fundamentalist groups, are influenced by their respective surroundings, such as dress, mannerisms, and social and cultural norms. Although this conclusion may sound trivial and commonplace, it is noteworthy because Haredi rhetoric tends to insist that "Haredi is Haredi is Haredi," no matter where or when. Be that as it may, the significant differences between Haredim in various countries explain why both scholars and laymen naturally refer to American Haredim, Belgian Haredim, British Haredim, French Haredim, or Swiss Haredim, rather than to Haredim who live in America, Belgium, Britain, France or Switzerland. (2006, p. 270)

The term used in this thesis, *American Haredim*, is indicative of a particular group of expatriates in Israel that still maintains social and cultural links with the larger ultra-Orthodox world. For the purpose of this thesis, by looking at Orthodox expatriate communities as a subset of the larger ultra-Orthodox community in Israel, a generalized picture of ultra-Orthodoxy in the Diaspora and ultra-Orthodox Jews will be considered. As far as relative levels of observance are concerned, these communities—indeed many groups having both Diaspora as well as Israeli communities—share very similar observances and outward trappings. The fundamental lifestyles of ultra-Orthodox communities in the Diaspora have very similar social underpinnings, and the motivating factors for study, observance, and maintaining a particular way of life are nearly identical.

The obvious large disparity between ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel and the Diaspora is the effect on religion in the public sphere. While private-sphere affairs relating to the trappings, beliefs, and events of everyday life may be identical, as far as public policy is concerned, there are obviously great differences when it comes to the separation of church and state. Although the focus of life in, for example, political aspects, may be varied, there are elements that make the Diaspora ultra-Orthodox experience unique. The ultra-Orthodox in the Diaspora are living among a greater degree of cultural assimilation and are surrounded by cultural influences that may not be present in a more homogeneous setting in Israel. This leads to various social allowances among Diaspora communities, such as interest in sports and some cultural activities, which are not necessarily discouraged to the same degree that they would be in a comparable society in Israel.

Although some ultra-Orthodox adherents in the Diaspora partake in listening to and participating in a culture of secular music, this is not necessarily condoned by the society or its institutions. Caplan points out that

> it is quite common to find American haredi yeshiva students who listen to ... music ... associated in their world-view with the American popular culture ... and some will even attend live concerts ... notwithstanding the fact that it is forbidden in some yeshivas and regarded as inappropriate in others. (2006, p. 272)

While these liberties are not condoned per se by the larger ultra-Orthodox religious community in the Diaspora, there is a level of acceptance and cultural and social integration.

The trappings of secular life are inescapable when living in a greater secular society. To this end, while there are many similarities between ultra-Orthodox communities in the Diaspora and Israel, a fundamental difference remains at the level of relative segregation with the larger society. Due to the separation of church and state in many parts of the Diaspora, the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel has a very different outlook and different priorities towards religious rights influencing the public agenda and their impact on the private sphere.

American Haredim or other ultra-Orthodox Jews living in the North American Diaspora or other locations of large ultra-Orthodox communities throughout the world have a very different way of integrating and reconciling the differences between their religious culture and that of the surrounding secular population. For example, a culture of sports and music, common elements that are found to be of great interest among the surrounding population, are followed with a level of interest in American Haredi society. “Many Haredi yeshiva students faithfully watch National Football League and National Basketball Association games.... Some of them know a great deal of sports information and statistics, such as the players on each team, their personal and team records” (Caplan, 2006, p. 272)

Sports is perhaps a more acceptable form of engagement with secular society as it does not require questioning basic religious, moral, or social tenets of the society, though the private lives of professional sports players leave something to question.

Though this is not exclusive to the experience in the United States, the generic term *American Haredi* refers to the blending of external and internal societal priorities. This balance is exemplified in the following description:

> A large number of ... rabbis, teachers and spiritual leaders frown upon their students taking part in activities associated with "decadent" Western culture, especially when they become involved in activities that resemble religious worship, such as sports. However, some rabbis and teachers will occasionally mention a team or an outstanding player in their sermons or lessons, in order to show that they are up to date. (Caplan, 2006, p. 273)

It is important to note that when it comes to elements of religious observance, dress, or lifestyle, American Haredim remain outwardly homogeneous and in many respects resemble their coreligionists in Israel. However, in the United States, there is an element of underlying Haredi values that are shared with the cultural or civic identity of the surrounding society, and to that extent, there is a great degree of involvement in the larger social and political spectrum. American Haredim engage within limits and seek to be a part of the larger social society in a relationship based on give and take rather than on domination through politics or religion in contrast to Israel where Haredi society is also generally, to a great degree, self-segregated. In Israel, through time, the Haredi experience has become more insular and does not concern itself as much with the external trappings of secular society.

While there is still a great degree of interest among younger Israeli Haredim in certain sporting events, this is frowned on by a much larger segment of society than in the United States. However, "awareness of the average Israeli Haredi yeshiva student on...aspects of Israeli culture [such as sports] is far more limited....He knows very little about local basketball and soccer leagues…or...genres of popular music" (Caplan, 2006, p. 274). In fact, there are elements of secular society, such as sports figures, used as teaching examples or in sermons in the American context, that create a relatable and identifiable example for use in, for example, a religious analogy. This is one of the fundamental underlying elements of the duality that is explored between Haredim in Israel and Haredim not native to the Israeli context. For American Haredim, having an external identity, such as being able to identify with concepts of liberal democracy and a plurality of opinions, as well as the elements related to institutional rigidity, set them apart from their Israeli coreligionists. As the issues regarding state and religion are more flexible in the American context and the experience of

the Diaspora differs greatly from the Israeli context, such as the pressures that American Haredim feel towards assimilation, the unique insights American Haredim bring to the study of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel are examined in depth in the thesis. According to Fader,

> Hayim Soleveitchik ... suggests [that in postwar North America], the "diminution of otherness" evoked a new vigilance among the second-generation Haredim. He notes that in voluntarily separate communities… there must be a continual reinforcement and heightening of difference. A central area where Haredim claim Jewish difference is increasingly stringent interpretations of sacred texts that they cast as the true essence of a shared Jewish past, although the texts actually reflect contemporary concerns with accuracy and authenticity....This invention of tradition was shaped not only by the experience of historical rupture but also [by] new opportunities for Jewish participation in North American life as citizens. (2009, p. 13)

Moreover, the OECD points out that "in the United States, Haredi rabbinical authorities allow their men to strike a balance between study and employment to provide for their families....The suspicion towards employment participation is much more a feature of Haredi communities in Israel than elsewhere in the world" (2010, p. 167). This is because employment is a complex first step into a secular society which the Diaspora is constantly surrounded with; this is much less the case in Israel, where the ultra-Orthodox community is generally more insular.

Being American Haredi (or English speaking and at the same time ultra-Orthodox) is in itself an inherent conflict. When interview participants were asked what it means to be American Haredi compared to Israeli Haredi compared to simply American, interesting nuances appeared in how they define the intersection between these dual roles. These relate to cultural integration. They relate to the way in which individuals interact with the society around them, not only on the surface but also in terms of education, employment, and life in general. The attitudes towards the outside world also vary greatly, and this comes out in the various interviews.

> *Well, I would say the difference between an American ultra-Orthodox and, let's say an Israeli ultra-Orthodox, I personally believe that the American ultra-Orthodox are a little more integrated into society. An American ultra-Orthodox Jew is more likely to be in the workforce. Especially if you're in New York, you'll land up working in the diamond district or many other similar type of activities. I believe that, in America, they are a little bit more*

> *focused on just American cultural things. That's because it's a little bit harder to shield themselves and their children that may follow sports, and they—you know. I have a friend of mine that's an ultra-Orthodox American. He's a big football fan, a New York Giants fan. You could find that more here [in America], whereas in Israel, which I'm understanding from your question that you're contrasting, it may be to an Israeli, that in Israel, they don't—they're really quite sheltered, and you know, you find that if any of the ultra-Orthodox starts wanting to become a little more involved in the—I guess you can call it secular culture—they completely shed any connection to their Judaism. They completely get rid of all their, you know, everything that they're doing. There's no real middle ground at all....So the American ultra-Orthodox still will look the same, I would say, as an Israeli ultra-Orthodox, but in terms of culture, I think they're a little more integrated; in terms of working, they're a little more integrated; and perhaps you could also say that, you know, an Israeli ultra-Orthodox will strictly speak in Yiddish to everybody in their family. And they probably do that as well in America, but I would say that they're more likely to speak English as well there.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

It is interesting that in the following interview, Yitzchak Cohen delineates the internal conflict between Torah observance and secular political ideology. Due to the political ideology, where there does not seem to be fundamental agreement in terms of how various individuals stress their commonalities such as in the Diaspora, in Israel, there exists a certain degree of tension in order to control the dialogue around religion and the power from the state that accompanies it.

> *I think American-Haredi, as opposed to Israeli-Haredi, is a little bit more open-minded because of the type of society that Americans come from. In America, since it's not a Jewish state, there's no contradiction of being a good citizen and being a Torah Jew. In Israel that's a problem because being a good citizen and being a Torah Jew could be two opposite things. They don't fit together well, so it creates a lot of problems. An American-Haredi person has found a way to live in a secular society; in Israel it's not the case. In America, since Haredi Jews have no political power, their only option is to persuade, whereas in Israel, persuasion is not an issue because they have political power. And that creates — that rubs a lot of people the wrong way. In America, Torah Jews are not a threat to secular society, and because of that, there's less of a friction, there's less friction. Orthodox Jews can walk, work, talk, and speak with secular people without a problem at all; here it's a little bit different.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

In an interview with Menashe Blum, he seems to make a very clear distinction between being a member of a political party and being part of a more closely integrated political identity, which takes on many more aspects of connection and involvement with the core group than one would find in the Diaspora. This interview also speaks to the clear voting bloc patterns, which are seen as crucial in order to preserve a degree of hegemony over religious affairs and provide political leverage in order to preserve the ultra-Orthodox way of life. This interview also indicates that this must be done through the ultra-Orthodox party mechanisms. An

outside party with secular ideology would not be able to provide the same level of tolerance or understanding as a religious party would. It, therefore, becomes imperative to vote in accordance with the larger bloc.

> *In Israel you have to belong to a political party, or not a political party as such — no, as a political — you have to be in a political party. Your yarmulke, your way you think, you have to belong to a group. You have to belong, you can't be on the outside all by yourself. That's why I have a trouble. Everybody in Israel belongs to a party, one party or another, secular or religious, they belong to a party. In America, you can be independent, it doesn't make any difference, nobody cares. And then for president, you can vote for who you want. But in Israel, you have to belong to a party, you have to vote for a party, it's different.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *But isn't it possible to be part of a party with special interests that doesn't have religious ideology?*
> ***Respondent:*** *Not if you're religious. If you're religious, whatever that party is, that party has a certain ideology which is a religious ideology, and either you're with that or you're not with it. If you're not with it, you can't identify with that party.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *So, you're saying that in order to identify culturally, it also leads into the political side of it?*
> ***Respondent:*** *Well, religiously, yeah. If you want to say culture and religion are the same thing, then yeah. The way you view Torah, the way you view Judaism will influence the type of party you belong to. And then you are influenced or you're basically told that you have to hold certain principles or certain ideas because you belong to a certain party.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

The idea of insular community is present in ultra-Orthodox society, and Deena Friedberg speaks to this facet of societal organization. The close-knit community of Israeli ultra-Orthodox members can be at odds with the more outward looking and socially integrated worldview of American ultra-Orthodox individuals. The ability to cross this barrier and to integrate into the Israeli ultra-Orthodox community can be challenging, but ultimately such a transition is possible. There is a degree of validity to the perspective that ultra-Orthodox expatriates are able to bridge a cultural gap between the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel and the ultra-Orthodox community in the Diaspora. There is also discussion of changing shifts and cultural cues, which are necessarily different in Israel from what they are in North America. Perhaps one of these factors is the large number of secular Israelis who by virtue of speaking Hebrew as their primary language may indeed have more in common with the ultra-Orthodox in Israel than secular Jews do with the ultra-Orthodox community in the Diaspora. Factors such as language, culture, society, holidays, and outside dominant culture all play a role in creating a unique intersection in cultural and perhaps even religious organization.

> *Well, I think that's because Israeli Haredim, as well, kind of see the difference. Most of them are very cliquish. My husband says that they're not so friendly. I don't know from the men, I just hear what he's saying. He says the men all stick together, they all knew one another from kindergarten, and, you know, all the way from cheder all the way up, and they're not so friendly to outsiders who are, like, the English speakers—not like there's a huge number in our community, but there are some. And he feels that they just tend to keep to themselves, they're not so friendly and whatever. And they have a more rigid view of things than someone who lived in North America and then made aliyah. Like, you know, we have a different perspective of things, and like a lot of kids also, like, going through the Israeli school system, they also have a more narrow-minded view of the world. Like if they see a man walking in the street without a kippah, they'd say, "Oh, he's not Jewish." My kids too. My kids came here when they were different ages. The youngest one was 3, the next one up was 6, 9, and 13. And the two younger ones—we put them into school right away, of course, and they started to pick up more Israeli values than the two older brothers who already had a North American education. And then one time I took them into town, and my little girl was like 3,4, and she saw a man without a kippah—"Oh, he's not Jewish." I said,*
> *"Yes he is, but, you know, not everybody wears a kippah or he doesn't know he's supposed to." So that's the kind of attitude I think that Israeli kids grow up with…they're more—you know, because they live in this very closed society, they have a different attitude than, say, kids from North America, where they are more used to the idea of—there are other people out there who are not exactly like themselves.* (Interview with Deena Friedberg, 2011)

Policies and goals

The policies and goals of the ultra-Orthodox community are generally very diverse. Depending on the specific faction within the community, there may be different elements that can be negotiated in order to attain a greater degree of social cohesion on behalf of the ultra-Orthodox community as a whole or around certain particular issues that are interpreted as impassable negotiating points for the community. The overall goal of the ultra-Orthodox community generally is to form an all-encompassing mode of life that is entrenched in textual interpretation. There is an ongoing process of trying to reconcile the textual with the practical aspects of people's everyday lives. This can be perceived both at the higher political levels as well as with the dialog within the community itself among different community groups.

Eventually, this cycle of textual interpretation and strictly controlled everyday behaviour lead to a point where societal norms become a type of performance steeped in textual interpretations and constantly re-enforced through communal involvement in all aspects of social life, from the mundane, such as the way in which men and women interact in the grocery store, to larger societal issues, such as education, national service, and so on. "Within a non-Zionist Orthodox and anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox there has been an overall

trend towards the *humra* -- increasing stringency and strictness of interpretation and practice, over the years" (Avruch, 2001, pp. 154–155). Even within the community, there are disagreements regarding the policies that should be in place regarding such contentious issues as the expansion of women's education.

> Education for girls and women saw the rapid growth of institutions devoted to the rudiments of religious life and observance of Jewish law, on the argument that modern Haredi women could not be trusted to have received adequate instruction from parents or other informal sources. In both Israel and the Diaspora, this included institutions such as Bais Yaakov…a federation of primary and secondary schools for Haredi girls closely affiliated with Agudat Israel, as well as *midrashot* (seminaries for adult women's education in Torah), and women's study circles and other types of part-time instruction sponsored by local synagogues and community institutions. (Stolow, 2010, p. 55)

As bread winners, it is important for women to have accessibility to the job market and be able to support their families through a variety of interaction, which interestingly often takes place in a secular environment. Yet women's education is also determined by ultra-Orthodox cultural norms, which limit educational options to certain possibilities. While these vocations show signs of expanding in the future, there is often a difficult balance to maintain between having availability to the job market, having job skills that are in demand, allowing for the social characteristic of the ultra-Orthodox community (such as maternity leave), and still falling within the regulated norms of everyday ultra-Orthodox life.

Throughout this process, which can be understood through the spectrum from education to many other aspects of social life, the government has tried with varying degrees of involvement to increase the potential of members of the ultra-Orthodox community to integrate to a greater degree. This naturally leads to a push-pull situation between the autonomy of the ultra-Orthodox community and the potential integration into the workforce, considering the particular social difficulties faced by ultra-Orthodox individuals seeking to expand their potential economic opportunities outside their social network.

> Ultra-Orthodox schools funded by the State have demanded that they be exempt from teaching English and mathematics required in other schools, to concentrate on Jewish studies. Against the group demand for autonomy rises the question of individual rights (pupils deprived of studying curricula that will allow them later on to choose their way in life, inside

> or outside the Orthodox community), but also a question of the common good: will these students be able later in life to integrate in the job market or will they remain poor and dependent on State allocations? (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 174)

These limited aspects, which show some of the fault lines between various groups within the ultra-Orthodox community and the compromises that they seek in order to maintain a homeostatic relationship or to maintain a relationship with the rest of Israeli society, underline a series of interdependent responsibilities. There are the responsibilities of the various schools and educational institutions at all levels, both religious and secular. There are the responsibilities of the society as a whole to the individual, both in terms of Israeli society to the ultra-Orthodox individual, as well as the ultra-Orthodox community to the individual. There is a further layer of responsibility of society to the protection of religion and minority rights, and these factors must be balanced in order to maintain equilibrium between religious society and the secular community. Even within the various communities themselves, there is a great degree of uncertainty, and, as a result, the policies and goals of the ultra-Orthodox community are often in flux seeking to find a stable middle ground without necessarily endangering their transpositions regarding such things as education and stipends for higher level yeshiva learning.

> Mr. Netanyahu…as Prime Minister, is fighting for Haredi schools and yeshivas to teach the basics (English, math, and science) to equip their graduates for the job market. It is still a fight, every politically sensitive step of the way. The Haredi rabbis and their political parties have waxed powerful as vital backers of ruling coalitions. They wrest cash from the state to fund the yeshivas. Mr. Netanyahu needs their votes. (*The Economist*, 2010, p. 50)

This may appear to put the ultra-Orthodox community as a whole and the rest of society, or perhaps the government, at odds, yet there is certainly a way to achieve religious fulfillment while still engaging the larger society as a whole.

> [A] major element of accommodation is the autonomy of religious institutions and culture, which protects the religious subculture from threat of assimilation by a secular society. This is especially marked in education, but extends through a network of institutions designed to preserve the integrity and vitality of religious life within the national-religious community. There is even greater separation in the Haredi community, which has its own courts, welfare

> institutions, religious authorities, and independent schools. The autonomy is not only an expression of Jewish traditions and customs, of course, but is also in some ways a continuation of the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire. The existence of these networks gives the most parties an additional stake in the status quo, since most of these institutions are State-supported despite their autonomy (even the "independent" schools in the Haredi community receive [full or partial] government funding). (Dowty, 2001, p. 168)

Mitnagdim and Hasidim

Many groups make up the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. It is important to note several specific examples to highlight various aspects of the ultra-Orthodox community. These divisions stem from the many different cleavages in Orthodox practice in Israel. These differences can include religious outlook and practice, social divisions, political perspective, origins, and so on. For example, two opposing groups, generally categorized as *mitnagdim* and *hasidim,* are often close in religious ideological position. Each group is representative of a slightly different religious philosophy and is composed, through various structures, with multiple leaders, social groupings, and movements. However, for all the differences between the mitnagdim (or opponents of *Hasidism),* and the ultra-Orthodox Hasidim, there are many similarities. These similarities include fundamental elements of religious observance, while differences occur in slightly different modes of dress, political attitudes, and social organization.

It is important to note that the rise of Hasidism and the backlash to it by the mitnagdim developed within the past few hundred years. While this movement fits into traditional patterns of Orthodoxy, there are many overlaid elements to the expansion of mysticism and spirituality in Judaism (Blumenthal, 1978). This led to the development in which the mitnagdim of the Lithuanian yeshiva world rejected the authority (and attitude) of the Hasidic movement in order to put the emphasis in Judaism back on textual learning and interpretation (Nadler, 1999).

Differences of worship relate to the attitude towards mysticism and ritual and prayer as well as to the fundamental understanding and interpretation of the ultimate authority over religious matters. In the case of Hasidim, as will be discussed later in the thesis, the *rebbe*, or the leader, is the ultimate authority in the religious hierarchy. This structure imitates a form

of European feudalism, and so far as the well-being of the structure is concerned, the group is relatively isolated (Mintz, 1992, p. 3).

For mitnagdim, or the movement that argues for more rational devotion, the result is increasingly rational, legalistic, and focused on textural understanding. There is also a shift in the perception of rabbinic authority, rather than on particular leaders of personality, followed by the community. In the same tight hierarchy, there is a great deal of scepticism regarding the inclusion of mysticism and other elements, which are an integral part of religious worship and way of life for the Hasidim. According to Eisenberg, Israel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of modern Hasidism, who was born in 1698 on the Russian-Polish border, "breathed life into a Judaism that had become ossified with the punctilious observance of ritual and devoid of any emotional content, and his influence spread to millions of Jews over the next two centuries" (1995, p. 2).

> The Hasidic movement offered a transformed and transformative Judaism. Sparked by the teachings of...the *Baal-Shem-Tov* "Master of the Good Name," Hasidism spread quickly through much of Eastern and Central Europe where pogroms against Jews were common, and many, especially in Eastern Europe, lived in poverty. Hasidism is messianic. Hasidic Jews hope that by fulfilling their religious obligations they will bring the *geulah* "redemption," which includes an end to Jewish exile and a rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem by God. The Messiah has been delayed, many believe, because of the impieties in the Diaspora (Fader, 2009, p. 7).

Many of the schisms between the Hasidim and the mitnagdim date back to an early period where a great deal of doubt and misconceptions were formed around the events relating to the Sabbatean movement led by Shabbtai Tzvi (Hazony, 2001, p. 288; Menken, 2005, p. 148; Wein, 1990, p. 21). In this particular incident, the fundamental element of spiritualism and mysticism were debated among the Jewish people, and the tragic ending of the events led to one of the criticisms of the Hasidic movement and its organization and thought. When Shabbtai Tzvi was ultimately found to be a false messiah, many were turned off by the contradiction in the religious belief in redemption, and the unfulfilled hope of a redeemer (Wein, 1990, pp. 21–29).

Nonetheless, both groups to some extent define themselves as maintaining a link to the traditions, teachings, and character of the European-Jewish experience. Its more modern

context, which has influenced a large number of Jews in the state of Israel, was one of the early facets of the Enlightenment. This form of social and religious upheaval was one of the factors that Orthodoxy formed in order to push back against the Enlightenment.

> Other traditionalist Jews based in Lithuania opposed Hasidic Judaism from its beginning, arguing that religious authority should come from scholars in *yeshivas*....These Jews were called *misnagdim* "opponents" (of Hasidism) or, alternatively, *litvish* "Lithuanians" referring to their place of origin or, later on, *yeshivish.* Litvish Jews followed the authority of the head of a yeshiva, rejecting the all-encompassing authority of Hasidic rebbes, the focus on mystical texts, and the ecstatic democratizing forms of worship (Fader, 2009, p. 8)

Examining Hasidic groups as a component of the ultra-Orthodox community is important for a number of reasons. The emergence of anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodoxy primarily comes from the Hasidic sector of the ultra-Orthodox community, and a brief discussion of the foundation and various social changes that have happened within this group is warranted within the larger context of an analysis of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. There are numerous major Hasidic groups, comprised of both large and small Hasidic dynasties. They are distributed through major cities in Israel and, with a few exceptions, generally live side by side within the ultra-Orthodox community.

> Aside from the Bobovers, Belzers, Satmar, and Lubavitchers, the other major Hasidic groups are the Vishnitzers, Gerers, and Klausenbergers, Skverers, and Bratslavers, along with a smattering of smaller sects. Slightly more than half live in Israel, primarily in the cities of Benei Brak and Jerusalem. (Eisenberg, 1995, p. 4)

There are many religious and social differences among Hasidim within the ultra-Orthodox community. One key difference is the hierarchy and organizational arrangement that Hasidic groups have that differ from other subgroups of the community and the prominence of certain beliefs such as the key Hasidic principle of Messianism. This belief in the redeeming Messiah returning Jews to the biblical land of Israel is a precursor to various Hasidic groups'—among others'—objections to modern day Zionism in the state of Israel. Since a key element is the belief in redemption, there is a natural opposition to formation of the state in a secular context.

> The Lubavitchers are among the most militant of all Jewish groups in their desire to retain the territories. The ultra-Orthodox response to this issue is confusing and contradictory. Where some Hasidic groups, Satmar in particular, would like to see the state of Israel dismantled and the Jews allowed to live peacefully under United Nations or even Palestinian governance, there are others, such as Lubavitchers, who while not willing to call themselves Zionists, behave like them in the extreme. While they take pains to reject Israel as the resurrection of the Davidic kingdom that existed before the destruction of the temple, they see the establishment of the State as a sign that the age of redemption is near. (Eisenberg, 1995, p. 153)

Historically for Hasidim, there have been major shifts from common practice in other ultra-Orthodox contexts, such as the organizational hierarchy in Hasidic groups with the rebbe being the unquestioned spiritual leader directly involved with the lives of followers. This more limited top-down pyramid like structure, in which the leader has the ability to interpret and be more active in the lives of participants, challenges the rabbinic authority of other rabbis who generally are perceived as authorities on various aspects of Halacha in the ultra-Orthodox community.

> However, as a successful Chasidic movement found itself in the... Jewish establishment all over Poland and even further afield, and its leaders themselves confronted the challenge of the Haskala, it became less radical in its stance. From ridiculing Talmudic casuistry it began to concern itself with punctilious observance of the halachah…and today Chasidim [consider] themselves and are considered by others to belong firmly to the traditionalist, Haredi camp, together with Mitnaggedim. (de Lange, 2008, p. 323)

While the basic text and liturgy is the same among many of the ultra-Orthodox groupings within the community, Hasidism introduced a new dimension of spiritualism and reintroduced elements of Messianic redemption and other practices. This sets them apart from others in the ultra-Orthodox community through rituals and religious practice as well as differentiates the essential philosophy of Hasidic thought from a more staid and textual-based interpretation of Judaism as practiced by other elements of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. Eisenberg describes Hasidim in the following way:

> To most observers, they seem strikingly anachronistic and somewhat mysterious. Dressed in the garb of eighteenth-century Poles—fur hats and black overcoats for the men, wigs and

> long skirts for the women—they seem almost otherworldly. The ultra-Orthodox of today, however, are not remnants of another time; they are the green shoots of a vibrant tradition that has its roots deep in the soil of Judaism. But it would be a mistake to think of them as monolithic. International Hasidism—there are about 650,000 worldwide—consists of a number of groups, each with its own unique perspective. (1995, p. 2)

Menashe Blum makes the case that Halacha is all-encompassing, and one who lives within the system of Halacha often follows rigid and delineated patterns of life and behavior. When issues are not necessarily clearly defined or when there is disagreement among religious authorities concerning those issues, there are tensions and conflict within the ultra-Orthodox community as to where and when an individual is able to be lenient or more stringent in his or her approach. This could then create a situation that would be in conflict with others in the ultra-Orthodox community, and one could therefore find oneself at odds with the consensus in the community.

> *I guess Halacha, I would define as religious law as developed, I guess, through modern poskim, and that's it. I mean the problem I think would be—is when it's not clearly stated in Halacha. When something is clearly not stated in a source and it's just da'as Torah, that's where a problem comes in. Where, you know, we believe that somebody that's so steeped in Torah becomes like a living sefer Torah, but he integrates all of this Torah and then whatever would come out of his mouth would be Torah. But he's now dealing with things which he can't really point to and say, this is the Halacha in this se'if of the Shulchan Aruch; it's not there. So when you have a problem like that, then you have varying degrees of disagreement among rebbeim and then a person has to think on his own—although this is not a haredi point of view—has to think on his own and find that rav who speaks to him. And that's not always so simple.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

Haredi recognition of the state

A fundamental conflict exists about the religious nature of the state. The inherent religiosity of the state of Israel and the repercussions for what that means are key issues of contention the ultra-Orthodox community has with secular society. Overlapping issues of national formation, such as ideologies regarding Zionism, Judaism, the practice, and purpose, to the way in which Judaism fits into the state and its role in state policy and formation, all come together to form an amalgam of ideological and political elements. These elements do not necessarily represent the traditional pattern of Jewish life in the Diaspora, and with the state as a new political, social, religious, and ideological entity, the ultra-Orthodox have many fundamental disagreements with the place of religion in the state, the nature of state

and religious interplay, and the general position the state of Israel takes towards the ultra-Orthodox community. “Some Haredim have…refused to accord any legitimacy to the state of Israel, insisting that the Jews remain a people living in divinely proscribed exile, even when living in the Holy Land” (Stolow, 2010, p. 45).

> [Nevertheless], Agudat Yisrael still recognized Israel only on a *de facto* basis, and other elements in the *Haredi* community did not even go this far. None of them accepted Israel as a legitimate state and government according to Jewish law; the difference lay in their willingness to make practical, temporary accommodations -- and thereby receive State funding -- while working to transform the secular order into a truly Jewish state based solely on the laws of the Torah as authoritatively interpreted by their own rabbinical establishment. While accepting the validity of Knesset legislation as “temporary” laws, therefore, Agudat Yisrael opposed the drafting of a mandate constitution for Israel (as did, for that matter, the religious-Zionists). Unlike the religious-Zionists, however, Haredi authorities also oppose the celebration of Israel Independence Day (including the recitation of Psalms -- *Hallel* -- on that occasion), use of the Israeli flag or other national symbols, or service (at least by their own youth) in the Israeli army. (Dowty, 2001, p. 167)

To understand the complex dynamics of how the ultra-Orthodox community views the state, an examination of the redemption is a critical starting point. Ultimate redemption of Jewish people from the Diaspora into the God-given land of Israel is a very different reality from a secular state, which is geographically situated in the land of Israel (Rawidowicz, Ravid & Meyer, 1986, p.184). For the ultra-Orthodox, the critical question is: How does the state of Israel move the Jewish people closer to this ultimate spiritual goal? For the ultra-Orthodox community, the state of Israel is, therefore, a nonissue in terms of the redemption, and the scene is being firmly tied into the here and now rather than having an intensely spiritual dimension. It is interesting as for other Jewish groups, and groups of other religions, Israel has an important spiritual dynamic and is considered by many to be the “Holy Land.” Yet for the ultra-Orthodox community, the inherent holiness of the land of Israel is tempered by the secular state, which does not always operate with the guidance of the values of the ultra-Orthodox community.

The religious character of the state and what this character represents outline the fundamental division in the state/religion debate. For the ultra-Orthodox community, the

question is what is to be done with the institutions of state and the organization of society as a whole given the outlook that the state is a fundamentally secular rather than religious entity. For the ultra-Orthodox community, steps must be taken, primarily spiritual, to bring about the ultimate redemption. For many, this is not through processes afforded by a state with a secular agenda regardless of the shared religious commonalities that exist between Zionism and ultra-Orthodox Rabbinic Judaism.

> The conflict between secular Israelis and ultra-Orthodox Haredim is not new. Indeed, Haredi criticism of the state of Israel has been widespread since the nation's independence in 1948. The criticism is rooted in the belief that a Jewish state has no legitimacy until the arrival of the Messiah. Because the independence movement of 1948 was largely secular, some ultra-religious consider the State fundamentally sacrilegious. (Simon, 1998, p. 14)

This conflict begs the question of what is the ultimate goal for Israeli society. Is it to forge a commonality, seeking outright acquiescence, or the outright assimilation of all groups into a new entity? Does this form a new Israeli citizen, the product of a compromise, or would a multicultural solution work in which differences are overlooked and the country is united through a shared element? Consociationalism perhaps provides one answer to this dilemma, but ultimately any goal seems to be difficult to attain when factoring in the history of a people who have withstood the temptations of assimilation and integration through living apart in numerous societies in order to preserve their distinct religious identity. While there is no question that this has evolved over time and new social realities have emerged from this process, the underlying concept of engagement versus withdrawal, immediate power versus an indirect control over the affairs of the community are all indications of the longstanding elements of the communal psyche to preserve autonomy and assimilation.

Despite the rifts that exist between the ultra-Orthodox community and Israeli society, as well as the apparent separations, the ultra-Orthodox community is actually very much involved in the affairs of state and society. This seems to be an illogical statement. Considering that to preserve values and ideology, the ultra-Orthodox community socially contracts and withdraws into enclaves in order to maintain its identity and traditions, the exact opposite should be true. In fact, distinct societies do not exist within the greater Israeli context; rather, the ultra-Orthodox community makes up a part in the larger Israeli society and is integrated in numerous ways, although this is not always overt. For this reason, a clear

distinction is made throughout the thesis by using the term *ultra-Orthodox community* instead of *ultra-Orthodox society*. This division illustrates how there is mutual coexistence and a fundamental interdependence.

There is a fundamental symbiotic relationship between the ultra-Orthodox community and the rest of Israeli society even if at times these two sides seem extremely far apart. Through an examination of the commonalities that the ultra-Orthodox community and secular Israelis have, new forms of mutual codependence may be recognized leading to potential solutions. This thesis utilizes one such example of ultra-Orthodox expatriates living at the crossroads between the extremes of ultra-Orthodoxy and access to the outside world. These key informants and inside/outsiders (Bernard, 2012, p. 171) are able to lend a unique insight into the functioning and some mutually existing bonds that unite the ultra-Orthodox community with secular society even if they are minor in terms of the major, political, and social issues of the day.

Despite the often touted claim by some in the ultra-Orthodox community that the state is illegitimate and their refusal to work within it, this is not the case for all.

> As a result of economic, social, psychological, and political conditions, however, this separation [between secular and Haredi society] is not hermetic. Members of the ultra-Orthodox community are actively involved in the modern Israeli State, working alongside secular Israelis and playing an integral part in decision-making processes taking place in the central political and economic institutions." (Livio & Weinblatt, 1999, p. 31; see also Ravitzky, 1996, p. 156)

For the majority in the ultra-Orthodox community there is a type of tacit acceptance of the realities in Israeli society and ways to work within the framework of the state while still maintaining an ideological opposition if only on a religious basis. This type of conflict may be an overt symbol of resistance to the very secular nature of the state. Perhaps maintaining that the state itself is illegitimate provides a way to preserve an intangible barrier to assimilation.

> The prevalent position currently dominant among most Haredi circles in the state of Israel (in a variety of versions) recognizes the secular state *de facto*, but has not granted it de jure recognition. Haredi representatives cooperate in a circumscribed and conditional manner with the institutions that are the outcome of the Zionist idea and the Zionist movement, but they

> deny the validity of the Zionist doctrine per se; that is, they reject the founding ideology of the national enterprise. (Ravitzky, 1996, p. 151)

Unlike other periods of assimilation the ultra-Orthodox community has faced in the past, such as during the Enlightenment, the current situation facing the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel is assimilation to a culture, a language, and values, which more closely mirror the ultra-Orthodox community than ever before. As a result, the tensions over issues of state and religion and the stakes in maintaining distance have never been greater. Though there are inevitable movements towards some form of acceptance and integration, even covertly, the issue of legitimacy is perhaps a clear way to distinguish between the secular state of Israel (and Zionist ideologies) and the promised land of Israel with its biblical significance. The land of Israel with its religious and mythic properties is still very much a part of the ultra-Orthodox dream of redemption, and cooperation with the secular state may be a way to accord a firm grounding to the possibility of spiritual and physical redemption in the land.

> While the Haredim still live in tension with Israeli society...they have "tacitly accepted" the existence of the State. With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defining Israel as a Jewish state, Haredim believe that they have an important stake in determining the meaning of the State. After all, who can best define what a Jewish state is if not those who strive to maintain their tradition in its most pristine form? Zionism may have defined the outer form of the Jewish state, but only the religious can supply the content of "Jewish." (Beck, 2010, p. 24)

For the ultra-Orthodox during the course of recent history, defining and redefining borderlines in both the physical and spiritual realm have taken on a new significance. As the ultra-Orthodox community seeks to establish and push forward boundaries, there are many new significant developments, which see the ultra-Orthodox community staking out and consolidating new territory and power. This ongoing push happens in terms of the physical realm, as well as in the social and religious spheres. There are a number of reasons why the ultra-Orthodox community, though on one hand withdrawing into a state of religious contraction, on the other, seek to expand into secular society. This is done in order to validate legitimacy of the ultra-Orthodox community and preserve its hold as the guardians of spiritual leadership and the sole interpreters of Rabbinic Judaism. According to Stolow, "the Haredim have involved themselves in a moral mission to expand the frontiers of Haredi

authority and to draw the Jewish nation further along a path towards what they define as repentance and redemption" (2010, p. 45). This has a widespread effect on secular society and, indeed, relates to the fundamental elements of setting government policy.

> [Moreover], the value of the *yishuv* framework and its institutions is measured only by the degree to which they bring the people of the Lord closer to the Torah, the commandments and the faith.… Accordingly, the future of the Jewish state is not preordained or predetermined by God. The people [are] invited to choose [their] own path and, accordingly, [their] destiny. God's judgment remains suspended and conditional. (Ravitzky, 1996, p. 145)

It is interesting to note that while the issues discussed could be simplified to the lowest common denominator, seemingly simple interactions between the state and the ultra-Orthodox community have a complex dynamic. Vying for power and perception, these questions in fact examine how the state relates to the ultra-Orthodox community and vice versa, which can be theoretically understood in the model of actors and institutions (Considine, 2004, p. 2). The added dimension of what this perception brings along with it is fundamental to understanding the way in which each side forms a symbiosis requiring input, uptake, and recycling of issues in order to preserve the status quo.

> The significance of the Haredi resurgence was apparent in the May 1993 ceremony to install a new Sephardi Chief Rabbi elected with a strong Shas support. Since this was a State occasion, marking the filling of a State office by official electors, the President of Israel was present and the national anthem (*Hatikva*) was to be sung. A number of those present, however, tried to prevent the singing of the anthem. As a television camera recorded the turbulent scene, Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef -- spiritual and political leader of Shas and a former Sephardi Chief Rabbi himself -- ostentatiously hid his face behind a pamphlet…This refusal to acknowledge the state of Israel, even when one of their number was being inducted in a State office, fed the apprehensions many had about the increasing political leverage of Haredi leaders. In the words of one editorial, Shas "treats the State as if it were a foreign entity, and it participates in its government for strictly materialist reasons." A Labor member of the Knesset put it less elegantly: "the more tightly they're connected to the teat the more they will kick the milk bucket." (Dowty, 2001, p. 179)

This process points to a fundamental conflict over duel loyalties as defined by religious leadership. This conflict asks questions of the individual as well as the community and the

state, such as how does the state function versus religion. How do the courts fare versus rabbinic leadership? How do Torah values stack up against secular hedonism? These fundamental conflicts are the starting point to understanding the critical issues facing the disenfranchised ultra-Orthodox community. These issues potentially present elements to designing a solution towards forging forward with a new Israeli identity, but such a solution begs the question if a new paradigm is even required.

> The state of Israel as a political entity and act of political organization by Jews is deemed to be devoid of religious significance, whether positive or negative; it is in itself a neutral phenomenon, existing within the secular realm; it is neither within the sphere of transgression nor of obligation, but rather within the voluntary sphere ... Rabbi Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz (known as the Hazon Ish), was recently and reliably summed up: "The Hazon Ish did not view the state as the height of darkness of exile, and certainly not as redemption, but rather as something merely technical and administrative; it therefore has no significance in principle, neither as a success nor as a disaster, and it has no connection with the redemption." (Ravitzky, 1996, pp. 151–152)

The question is: Does a solution that tackles fundamental differences in these various structures hold more promise than a new ideal in which the immediate and the practical take precedence over the ongoing debate about religious theology and the place of Judaism in the state? The very question of the centrality of religion within the state structure is key to understanding the makeup of Israeli state and society, and the answers to this particular question vary widely depending on who is being asked.

The State as a religious manifestation

Religious Zionists consider the state to be a religious entity having inherent holiness, and, indeed, they regard the creation of the state as being a miracle. Religious Zionists see continuity between the biblical Land of Israel and the modern state of Israel and consider a direct correlation in the religious observances that they follow as a result. "A large contingent of politically active Jews regard their homeland as the expression of an incomplete form of religious nationalism....[I]t is essentially a secular state...and that leaves many Jewish religious nationalists deeply dissatisfied" (Juergensmeyer, 2008, p. 55). Miles explains further:

> For the Jewish state, the origins of a religious political movement go back to the beginnings of modern Zionism [which]...crystallized under the spiritual guidance of Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines to justify and ensure a religious dimension to the project of a Jewish homeland. Reines, while maintaining the traditionally messianic underpinnings of legitimate Zionism, provided a theological justification for settling the Land of Israel without compromising the belief in divine redemption" (2010, p. 182).

Three examples of the religious observances of Religious Zionists include the feelings towards serving in the military as a mitzvah, as will be discussed in depth later; the recitation of "Hallel, Psalms of Praise," with a blessing, on Israel's Independence Day, cementing their relationship between ritual observance and the modern state, while other groups recite "Hallel" without a blessing or do not recite "Hallel" at all; and *shmita*, or the observance of the sabbatical year in agriculture (Berlin and Grossman, 2011, p.246; Telushkin, 2008, p.746). This, among other Jewish laws pertaining solely to the land of Israel, was not observed in the Diaspora, and new solutions and terms had to be reached in order to revive these centuries-old commandments, traditions, and prohibitions. Much of this was done in the early 20th century as the Zionist ideal of returning to the land of Israel started to take shape. Many Religious Zionists had to come to terms with the return to Israel and what that meant in a religious context in relation to the creation of a state within biblical Israel.

> While extreme Jewish activists view the state of Israel as a largely secular entity, for many (including its Arab opponents), Israel is an example of religious nationalism achieved. Muslim nationalism in the Middle East has been fueled in part by a kind of religious competition, since many Muslim political observers feel they deserve what the Jews have, their own state. Some Egyptian activists claim that the Jewish nation's religious zeal—in contrast to the secular indifference of their own country—contributed to Israel's victory in the 1967 War. (Juergensmeyer, 2008, p. 55)

Many Haredim do not view the state as a religious entity as they believe the time for redemption had not come. In this view, the state was created by mortal means, rather than the divine, and thus lacks the approbation of a higher power. In this view, for the ultra-Orthodox community, "Judaism represents a personal and national commitment to a relationship with God defined by Torah laws and values; and consequently a Jewish state must be a theocracy"

(Reghai, 2009, p. 66). The creation of the state and the lesson behind it are not equated to divine providence in the ultra-Orthodox view; rather, they are seen as a form of pre-empting destiny with a secular state. Furthermore,

> the State's conception and birth were neither holy nor profane...neither a messianic awakening nor an anti-messianic eruption. Rather, it should be judged like any other historical phenomenon: according to its concrete relationship to the Torah, and according to the attitude of its leaders and adherence of the precepts of Halachah. (Ravitzky, 1996, p. 145)

With this interpretation, the ultra-Orthodox community finds it easy to become unaligned with the state.

Though many ultra-Orthodox Jews live in Israel, they do not view the entity of the state as inherently holy; rather, they view the land of Israel as viewed from the perspective of the Bible until the present as being inherently holy. However, this does not necessarily mandate a Jewish government running the state. This opinion has very diverse views. For example, on one extreme, the Neturei Karta, who do not believe in a Zionist state at all, would be happy with a gentile leadership such as the Palestinian Authority to control the state of Israel (Berger and Ahimeir, 2002. p. 253). On the other extreme, are ultra-Orthodox Israelis celebrating military victories through attributing their Torah study to secular military victory as a form of a contemporary religious miracle. Nevertheless,

> both major groups within the religious population refused in principle to recognize the supremacy of State law over religious commandments: religious-Zionists did so because their Zionism was linked to the State's religious mission, while non-Zionist Orthodoxy disputed the State's legitimacy from the outset (Dowty, 2001, p. 161).

Moreover, according to Avruch,

> In perceptions of Redemption, Exile, and the Land, messianic nationalism and anti-Zionist Orthodox or Haredi Judaism differ fundamentally. Yet all these differences are condensed in the symbol of Israel as the Jewish state. Ultimately what distinguishes *Israeli* Judaism and sets it apart from the preceding millennia of Jewish history... is the linkage of Judaism, as cultural and social systems, both to the legal and institutional, as well as the coercive and destructive, capacities of a modern state. It is [in] their respective perceptions and valorizations of the Jewishness of the state of Israel, that the faces of ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox-nationalists and Israeli Judaism differ most profoundly and fatefully. (2001, p. 151)

Yitzchak Cohen points out the inherent conflict between Israel as a Jewish state and the religious nature of what that actually entails. Separating democracy without religion from democracy rooted in a religious tradition is essentially complex when the democracy forms itself in the mould of religious identity but at the same time is inherently secular in character. It is interesting that Cohen notes that the state considers religious dictates when planning public policy. In the Rabbinate, for example, government policy is informed by religious norms in the ultra-Orthodox community. This is most apparent when dealing with issues that involve the private sphere. In terms of policy affecting the public sphere, however, very little strictly religious observance is mandated to be publicly practiced; rather, the intention is symbolic in nature. This appears to align with the notion, pointed out in the interview, that the foundations of the state are inherently secular, and this, therefore, dictates the way in which policy, and perhaps even perception, is implemented.

> *I believe that, as a homeland for the Jewish people—that's something that Israel has always stated as its number one goal from its founding—that Jews from all around the world can find Israel as their home. They'll be accepted and can become a citizen. However, I think the state is run in a secular sense, through a democracy with not—it's not run through religion. I do feel that because there is a large percentage of the population that is religious, they do take that into consideration when it comes to certain laws, just to accommodate the religious public. At the same time, I think that the country's laws are based on a general democracy, not necessarily anything based on religion.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

Menashe Blum notes that there is a distinct difference between a state that runs in accordance with religious principles and a pragmatic approach to incorporating and acknowledging religious dictates in trying to find solutions that are imitable across society. The link between the state and religion, Blum maintains, is often delicate and fragile and requires constant attention in order to meet the needs of all those involved. He notes a fundamental issue of willingness to accept religious dictates. This is more than simply a matter of accepting religion in the public sphere. It is rather a complex series of arrangements as part of the status quo and other societal conventions in which a push-pull relationship is accommodated in order to find mutual grounds. The compromises that have been made by both sides are integral elements of the compromises made in Israeli society and are, therefore, the important aspects in the balance of politics, society, and state.

> *I don't think—I think the link is very fragile. I think Haredi Jews would like the connection to be very, very broad and very deep, but it can't be that way because the secular government, or the secular community, is not interested in having a halachic state. And those parts of the*

> *state that do run by Halacha, or that are influenced by Halacha, is only because they have no choice. I don't think they do it out of— they want it, they want the army to be kosher, I don't think anybody in Israel's secular society wants it to be kosher; it was something that had to be done at the beginning that just kept on. Today there are many more religious Jews in the army, but I don't think it's something they wanted; it was just something that was necessary.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

Eliezer Weiss makes a very interesting observation that religion in the context of Israel gives fundamental meaning and purpose to why society functions as it does. Now what is particularly fascinating about this interview is that Weiss blends the land of Israel and the state of Israel concept into an amalgam in which military service is acknowledged, while at the same time, it is done through a religious paradigm. This amalgam, while uncommon, shows how even in the most secular circumstances, there can be a religious interpretation and meaning, and, perhaps, this can be indicative of the attitude required to support a multicultural society. In such a society, each individual would interpret, for example, state institutions as he or she sees fit and assign meaning to those various elements, while at the same time, the state or the institution would maintain an internal self-awareness to guide its purpose. Moreover, Weiss notes the commonality rooted in religion. This is also interesting as it does not necessarily extend to a multicultural definition within the context of Israeli society or in the example used here, within the military. It does not take into account anyone other than Jews if, indeed, it is accepted that the motivation for service and various practices within the military are based in religious practice rather than in an effort to create a particular type of citizen through indoctrination in the military experience. This view has an interesting extension through a religious line of reasoning, in which everyone in the society does participate in a religious master plan whether or not he or she is cognizant of it. This, therefore, lends credence to religious thought such as the ultimate return of the Jews to the land of Israel or, in this case, the combination of the state of Israel and the land of Israel.

> *Okay, I see that as positive because especially in the army— if you're in the army you can be in situations where you have to give up your life, so it would be real nice to know why you're doing that. And if you're not religious, I can't see how they justify themselves. If you're religious, I can see how. Okay, I'm helping defend Eretz Yisrael, I'm protecting other Jews, I see a reason. But if you don't have those, I don't quite see— even the littlest things; Kiddush, keeping kosher in the army— all this stuff is theory because, unfortunately, in practice it's not always put into effect. But at least according to the rules it's supposed to be. The army takes just about all the soldiers to all sorts of religious places to get a feel because even the secular Jews here realize that the basis of everything really is Torah. They might not want to accept it and they won't say so orally, but they know that that's the bottom line. I mean, that's why we're here.* (Interview with Eliezer Weiss, 2011)

Deena Friedberg makes an interesting comment on the state as well as the secular professions and examines ideas such as cultural background versus religion. This fundamentally relates to the state and its definition as can be seen through the example of the Declaration of Independence, which does not explicitly mention religious precepts, such as the outright mention of God, and rather uses the term *Rock of Israel*. In essence, Friedberg shows the complexity surrounding the fundamental nature of a Jewish state and highlights the difficulties that arise out of creating a secular state based on what is in essence a religious definition.

> *Okay, I mean it's a Jewish state simply because we are—happen to be in this land that happened to be given to Avraham Avinu. It could have gone to Uganda. I mean that's where Theodor Herzl— I don't want to get started on him, but—he didn't really like it. He came one year for a visit, he said it's dirty, it's disgusting, we might as well take Uganda. We just need a Jewish country so there won't be any anti-Semitism in the world. He was, like, totally off base, you know. But people here, they, you know, they turned him into a hero. If they knew what they—what he really thought of Israel, you know (inaudible). But when the founding fathers of Israel started— Ben Gurion, he did have somewhat more respect for religious leaders than nowadays. Now that's all gone. But also, like, in the Israeli Declaration of Independence, they—he wanted to—somebody wanted to put in a mention of Hashem. and other people said no, so they compromised on the word "Rock of Israel." So that is sort of an allusion to Hashem, but except for that it's not, like, considered, like, a Jewish state, it was just that they wanted a country, they wanted a refuge after the Shoah to have our own country. But it isn't what it should be. It's far from it....Well, technically there are a few things, that they're not allowed—Israeli diplomats are not allowed to be seen eating in a treif restaurant, or I don't know if they are allowed to violate Shabbos openly—maybe not if they keep a low profile, or whatever. So they do have certain things, you know. Or when they bring world leaders to Israel they take them to the Kotel or they take them to Yad Vashem, but I don't know if it's, like out of religious reasons or it's just like, you know, like this is our cultural background. It's a cultural thing, not a religious thing.* (Interview with Deena Friedberg, 2011)

Yehuda Aronson examines the way in which, superficially, it may appear that the secular government is taking certain elements of Judaism into the context of state formation; however, this can be, as the interview notes, "widely open to interpretation." This contextual understanding of societal aspects led to a particular vision of what Judaism, within the context of a secular state, should be and, therefore, is not necessarily reflective of traditional, long-held beliefs around Judaism. This speaks to the fundamental issue at hand, which American Haredim are able to see as the duality between secularism and a religious state. It is interesting that this is noted as the correct way to interpret things rather than the viewpoint of a secular Israeli who, as the interview notes, has already been exposed to the wrong

context, which, therefore, has a domino effect, further masking the potential for the organization of religion and the state. This interview nicely lines up the controversies of secular versus religious, interpretation versus practice of Judaism, modernity versus tradition, and, ultimately, the meaning of a secular religion. The religious context and significance, a way of looking at things from a uniquely religious perspective, need to be considered when looking at the holistic view of how state and religion merge in the modern construct of the state of Israel.

> *So what they're doing—they're taking the trappings of Judaism—Saturday and, you know, day of rest, and you know, certain basic concepts, okay, and not religious, but they're using it as a background or format to be able to do your own thing. And it's—and that's open to your interpretation, whim, whatever. And the religious people will say, no it isn't. You're stealing the kedushah of it, and there's real core values there which you're doing the external without the core of it, and that's causing problems. So the secular guy who grew up with that—he—even when he—if he becomes a baal teshuva, even, you know, he has to relearn all that stuff—he said, I knew that concept, but I always understood it in the wrong context. Everything now becomes the wrong context. I'll tell you a little story about that also. I was once—I was learning in yeshiva and I had a—this was back in America— I had a—we had a discussion at the Shabbos table once. We had some Israelis in American yeshiva, and like we said, oh wow, it's so easy, they can read the Hebrew. They could read the Hebrew text and it's so easy. They have a big advantage of their mastery over the Hebrew text. So—until somebody pointed out—they said, you don't realize that it could be a hindrance as well. Because they know Hebrew, and they knew it may be in a secular way—in this case I'm referring to modern Hebrew—the text of modern Hebrew, Ben-Yehuda modern, the dictionary of modern Hebrew—that also stole a few Torah words and changed it a little bit. So take an American who doesn't know Hebrew at all; I have to learn, I'll learn it right from scratch. Whereas the Israeli already knows it in the wrong context. It's harder for him to throw out the old associations when he's going to, you know, start learning the Hebrew text. So he's got—in that respect he has a disadvantage by knowing Hebrew. So—and the same thing over here. If you didn't know anything about Shabbos, the first—being exposed to the beauty—you'll see the kedushah of Shabbos, you could understand it in its proper context. If you know Shabbos because in a secular way, so you just don't get it. I'll tell you a story about that also. If—I don't know if this is a thesis (inaudible) [or]stories. This is going back almost about 30, 40 years when they were throwing stones on Shabbos. You know, "Shabbos!" And hafganot. So, I remember seeing there was a rabbi was screaming when the cars were moving, "Shabbos! Shabbos!" So a secular lady came out and opened the door—"Everybody knows it's Shabbos, what are you yelling for?!" Yeah, it's like saying, you know, "Tuesday, Tuesday!" Yeah, they just do. Like it just—the word "Shabbos" has no kedushah to it. (Laughs). So, that was pretty funny because she understood the word, but she didn't understand the significance of that word. Okay, that's the conflict.* (Interview with Yehuda Aronson, 2011)

Ephraim Lerner looks at issues of state and religion and examines the biblical land of Israel versus the modern state of Israel and what this means in the context of Judaism and day-to-day practice and philosophy. The debate over the place of religion in society is also

important, not only in this particular context but in general, as the wider society aims to take elements of religion and adapt them for cultural and societal reasons.

> *When Napoleon conquered Europe, a delegation of Christians and, I think, Moslems, came to him and said,"take all the Jews and ship them to Israel." And he said, "why?" And they said, "because they're Jewish and that's the Jewish homeland." And he called all the Jewish leaders, and he asked, "well, you guys ready to go to Israel?" And they said, "no." And he said, "well, you're Jews. Israel is your homeland." They said, "Judaism is a religion. It is not a state." So it is a religion. Israel is the place where the religion says that is where the country should be. But it doesn't mean that if you're outside Israel, you don't keep the religion. Religion is a person thing, and, of course, it's easier to practice here, and thank G-d, a lot of opportunities that you don't have there. So it's kind of an assistance to our practicing the religion better and easier.* (Interview with Ephraim Lerner, 2011)

It is important to understand how religion fits with the nation's psyche, and this can be seen particularly at times of crisis. Certainly, during times of crisis, there has been widespread national reform and a movement to turn towards tradition, albeit on a temporary basis. The reasons for this are many, and the effects were perhaps temporary due to the various hardships that were going on at the particular time. It did not have a long-lasting effect because of the difficulties associated with adopting religious dictates rather than maintaining a secular lifestyle, still within the milieu of being somewhat observant of some elements in Israel.

> *In the final analysis—let's put it this way—I was here during the Six Day War. I was in a bomb shelter not a mile away from here, okay? And when all the nurses went away to the front, Sha'arei Tzedek was left without any nurses. So all of us at […identifying information removed…] went over to Sha'arei Tzedek, and we filled in—and we ran that hospital. And when the boys came back from the front, they came to that hospital and they told us their stories. Totally mind-boggling stories about whole platoons of Egyptian people surrendering, enormous shiryonim of tanks coming towards these small three tanks, Israeli tanks—and all of them stopping one at a time—do you know the story? Probably not, because it was told to me by a chayal personally, it's not a second-hand story. He was in a group of three tanks, and they were advancing against this enormous line of Egyptian tanks, and one by one the tanks started stopping. The first one stopped, the second one stopped—And there was—as I recall, I think it was 20. It might have been 10, but I think it was 20. And by the time the last one was about to stop—and they all had radio contact among each other—by the time the last one was rolling, he stopped, and he got out of the top of his tank, and he screamed, "please, please, I surrender." It seems as though each one of these Egyptian tank platoons—each one of them in turn would radio the next one, or radio the rest of them; there's a man here, he's got a white a white beard. And then there was silence. They said, there's a man here, he's got a white beard. And there was silence. Until this one guy was left, and he said, you know—that's it. And this guy came back (laughs) with this story—and there were more stories like this. That one just sticks in my mind.*
>
> *People—in the streets, people were going up to Haredi people on Rechov Malchei Yisrael. That's where—you know where Machon Gold was? Haturim and Malchei Yisrael. And people—soldiers were coming out of Schneller and practically attacking Haredim with*

> *their tefillin—"please, please, put the tefillin on me. Please, please, I want to lay tefillin. Please, please, doesn't anybody have a pair of tefillin?" In the hospital it was happening all of the time. People—it was—it was like nothing you've ever seen. People would, you know—it was like u'malah ha'aretz de'at Hashem k'mayim layam m'chasim—it was—the whole country was in this frenzy of I've got to be frum, I've got to be frum. And you know something? We all knew it couldn't last. We knew it couldn't last. ... Don't forget we were constantly outnumbered, and right now we are—and we were out-ammunitioned by the Lebanese—and let them PR themselves all over the place—well, we won that war.*
>
> *The chesed over there with the guy who made all those tents on the seashore for the people from—you know, from the cities around Haifa? And guess what? If they had what we think they had, they could have lobbed them and killed everybody on the seashore. They didn't, did they? Why do you think the paradigm didn't—it did, and it does all the time, but guess what? Torah's not convenient. People don't want to keep Torah. No fun. At least they think it's no fun.*
>
> (Interview with Yocheved Saks, 2011)

Haredi versus Religious Zionist perspective

There are various differences between the ideologies of Haredi groups and Religious Zionists in Israel. Each has a particular take on the state and levels of religious observance as well as stringencies. However, one interesting point of contention is the involvement of each group with the state and, more so, its theological understanding of the state's intrinsic holiness. Many Religious Zionists, if not all Religious Zionists, serve in the armed forces and in certain units are disproportionately represented since pre-military academies, as well as highly motivated soldiers, factor into impressive numbers of volunteers for elite units. Many Religious Zionists see an inherent holiness in the modern state of Israel, connecting biblical Israel to the modern state in a continual historical chain or connection. This connection not only creates a duty to serve in the armed forces, but serving in the armed forces also fulfills a religious obligation and creates a positive good deed, or mitzvah.

> For national-religious Jews, at least, there are cross-cutting affiliations, as they are integrated fairly well into the economy, governmental service, the army, and the media.... the politicization of religious issues is itself a moderating factor since it means that these issues are threshed out in bargaining between party leaders rather than being worked out directly on the popular level. (Dowty, 2001, p. 170)

Haredim, for the most part, see the modern state of Israel as a pre-emptive entity that, in itself, has no inherent holiness. "Haredim view Zionism and the drive for land as a modern form of idolatry. As one Haredi rabbi put it, 'For us, the Torah study and practice take

primacy over the land'" (Beck, 2010, p. 24). As the state was originally established as a wholly secular state, which includes accommodations towards religion on the basis of historical and cultural aspects, the modern state does not merit religious character. For Haredim, the concept of ancient biblical Israel and the modern state are very far removed, and many Haredim believe that only the coming of messiah will bring a time of redemption and, ultimately, the return to the land.

Most Haredim see the state now as being inherently secular and, as a result, do not view it as positive to serve in the armed forces or participate on a state level. Moreover, "Haredim rejected the association of Hebrew with the nationalist aspirations of the Zionist movement and the perceived defiling of the holy language that every day use of Hebrew implied" (Bogoch, 1999, p. 124).

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the changing perceptions during the past three decades. Haredi involvement in politics has skyrocketed and has completely changed the way in which the Haredi public is viewed, both in Israeli society and in the power that they hold in the fractured Knesset. Haredim often have the swing vote and are crucial to any coalition as they are a very stable block of voters who have very strict voting discipline for whichever party the rabbis endorse, nearly always an ultra-Orthodox one. The Haredi voting practices is explained:

> The relationship between Haredim and Zionism became more complex after the founding of the state in 1948. Some Haredi groups adopted a pragmatic position, and involved themselves in the political process of the state by voting in elections and accepting state funding. Others have maintained a more hard lined rejectionist position, refusing all funding from Israeli state and abstaining from taking part in the political process. (Books LLC, 2010, p. 20)

Many ultra-Orthodox Jews see a symbiotic relationship between their idealized Torah study and the continuation of the state. They view themselves as the guardians of the religion and the biblical Land of Israel through their religious observances and do not necessarily feel that their involvement on a national level is necessary for the country's survival. Their separation can be viewed thus:

> A community's separateness is reflected in the dress of its adherents. In modern Israel, it is likely that a man whose head is covered (unless he is in the sun) is religious and supports a religious party. But the differentiation is likely to be even finer: A knitted *kipah* (skullcap)

> has become a symbol of the NRP [National Religious Party] and especially of its youth movement; a non-knitted *kipah*, by extension, often indicates support for the religious point of view, but probably not for the NRP. Black wide-brimmed fedoras and suits generally identify non-Zionist Orthodox supporters — popularly known as "black hats" in Israel — while the more traditional garb of long-flowing robes and fur hats identifies the dress of the Aguda and their supporters and separatists. Different subgroups also have different colored socks, gowns, and other identifiable garments. (Arian, 2009, p. 87)

Religious Zionists

Religious Zionists have a very different perspective on the place of religion in the state than the majority of the ultra-Orthodox community. Nevertheless, while some Religious Zionists wear a distinctive kippah, which symbolizes their particular beliefs, Religious Zionism spans the spectrum including the traditional majority to Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox community.

Essential tenets of Religious Zionism are a belief in the inherent religiosity of the state, seeing a divine interpretation of history, and reimagining social priorities based on the de facto reality of the establishment of a Jewish state. Seeing contemporary Israel as a religious entity, which goes beyond the ultra-Orthodox belief of the biblical land of Israel versus the modern secular state of Israel, Religious Zionism attributes religious principles to the modern state as well. This perspective, therefore, interprets history, such as military victories, as being accomplished through divine intervention and indirectly assigns religious significance to the planning and various outcomes of the affairs of state.

> After the Six-Day War in 1967, religious Zionist groups saw the capture of the West Bank and Jerusalem as a confirmation of a divine plan. They began to spend all their energies and resources settling the new areas, leaving their traditional concerns for education and for preventing secularization in the hands of the Haredim. (Beck, 2010, pp. 23–24)

Participating in the various functions of the state, ranging from serving in the military to paying taxes, can all be interpreted as fulfilling a religious obligation as Zionism as a political philosophy becomes a key tenet in religious belief, practice, and observance. Religious Zionism stems from the belief that the divine is involved with the modern state of Israel, and, for example, founding the state, though the leadership was secular, was part of a

divine plan. Thus, the object of the Mizrachi (Religious Zionist) “political party...with the slogan ‘the land of Israel for the people of Israel according to the Torah of Israel’...was to provide a voice for Religious Zionists and to unite with secular Zionists in achieving a Jewish national home as an antidote to assimilation and Anti-Semitism” (de Lange, 2008, pp. 211–212).

While Religious Zionists are concerned about religious identity and assimilation the same way that Haredim are, they endeavour to use state resources, such as publicly-funded religious schooling and integration, as a method of maintaining their religious cohesion. As a result, they are looked upon favourably by many groups across the spectrum that see them as contributing to secular society. One of the key elements of Religious Zionism and one of the fundamental changes it has had on the attributes of Orthodoxy in Judaism in the Israeli context is that there has been a great deal of religious discussion regarding the place of the state in religious dialogue.

Zionism changes the social priorities within the spectrum of Jewish social engagement. For example, integration is a hallmark of Religious Zionism, and this includes all aspects of participation in the state. This is not the case for many in the ultra-Orthodox community who see the state as both an external and foreign product created within the land of Israel outside divine intervention. The traditional resistance to integration that has been the hallmark of the Jewish experience throughout the Diaspora is pushed aside for Religious Zionists to engage with the state for religious reasons. The key motivator for avoiding contact with secularism and outside influences has been the fear of assimilation, which has been replaced with a religious purpose to integrate into society for the sake of the divine. This, therefore, takes many forms of engagement with the larger secular society and often puts the Religious Zionist movement in conflict with the ultra-Orthodox community. There is an underlying shared religious commonality, yet the ultra-Orthodox shy away from adapting or changing their modes of dress, views, and engagement with secular society in order to maintain a traditional Orthodoxy. At times even going so far as to increase the level of stringency observed in order to react to heightened threats of assimilation, Religious Zionists seek to create a new identity within the context of Zionism and religious Judaism.

This belief furthers the co-joining of state and religion in Israel and places increased importance on the involvement of the state in religious affairs and policies. It is interesting to

note that many aspects of the bureaucracy involved in the management and organization of religion in Israel are the domain of the ultra-Orthodox community. Some issues, or especially some religious disagreements, are particularly fierce when there is a significant difference of opinion between Religious Zionists and the ultra-Orthodox.

Religious Zionism shares many aspects of the various degrees of Orthodoxy in Israel on a religious basis, with a number of exceptions. Religious Zionists have many of the same stringencies as large segments of the ultra-Orthodox community. What distinguishes Religious Zionists from other groups among religiously affiliated communities in Israel is that Religious Zionists believe in the inherent religiosity of the state. This creates a clear distinction between the biblical land of Israel and the modern state of Israel. By interpreting the existence of the secular Jewish state as being a miraculous event showing a degree of divine inspiration, many elements of the secular state take on religious dimensions. These include serving in the military, paying taxes, being involved in society, and a host of biblical and rabbinic era precepts, which are only possible to observe in the land of Israel.

In contrast, the ultra-Orthodox, disparage any religious attribution to the modern state and see the creation of a Zionist state through secular nation-building as co-opting the divine plan for the Messiah and return of the biblical land of Israel. Religious Zionists are often involved to a great extent in the religious activities of the state and are very strongly represented in the military revenant as well as the state revenant, yet the overall numbers of Religious Zionists are much smaller than the ultra-Orthodox community as a whole. This, therefore, indicates that even though the ultra-Orthodox community may not in many respects be directly engaged in religion within the state, the overall influence and direction of the degree of Orthodoxy mandated in state religious policy follows that of the ultra-Orthodox community. This is a contentious area; in many cases, Religious Zionists seek to be increasingly lenient in their interpretations of religious dictates, particularly those that apply to the land of Israel such as observance of the sabbatical year and other controversial issues, yet due to the political power of the ultra-Orthodox through their superior numbers, progress in this area has been very difficult to achieve.

One key issue between Religious Zionists and the ultra-Orthodox involves the state as a religious entity. Many Religious Zionists, who themselves are a brand of ultra-Orthodox, although they are fully integrated into society, having attained secondary and post-secondary

education, view the state as an intrinsically religious entity. This is not the case with the Haredim, who view the state as wholly secular. Many view the state as a corruption of traditional Jewish values; although the state is run with several religious elements built in, it is not itself a religious state but rather a secular, liberal democratic one.

If Haredi attitudes were changed to accept integration, they would be much more like Religious Zionists, maintaining a religious identity and achieving success in society. Ravitzky clarifies:

> Opposing views... [attribute] a distinctive, inherent religious significance [to] the Zionist movement and the state of Israel – for good or for evil. Both views also profess to foresee – each from its own point of view – the destiny of Zionism and the future of Israeli society. However, the majority of ultra-Orthodox Jews utterly reject both of these ideological stances and dismiss their judgments regarding these questions. From the Haredi point of view, the state of Israel is a religious neutral entity, part of the secular realm still belonging to the age of exile. (1996, p. 145).

Moreover, according to Cohen and Susser,

> between the traditionalists and the secular Zionists stood the Religious Zionists. Theirs was a complex and multifaceted stance. Being both Zionist and religious, they were simultaneously allies and enemies to both sides. They mediated between the poles and, like so many mediators, were often charged with treachery by both sides. The history of Religious Zionism chronicles the shifting and intricate relationships, the strains and pressures, that resulted from the confrontation with its two polar allegiances. (2000, p. 4).

Defining the "pressure points" of disagreement over the implementation of religion, Zionism, and the state is therefore crucial to understanding how the pieces fit together.

2. Streams of Judaism in Israel

Within the larger context of defining who the ultra-Orthodox are, it is important to discuss the place of the ultra-Orthodox community within the larger spectrum of religious groups in Israel. This situates the ultra-Orthodox community as a whole within the Orthodox and as part of traditional groupings within Judaism in Israel. This section will include an examination of the ultra-Orthodox community and the various forms of Orthodoxy it follows,

as well as a brief study of traditional Judaism, where many in the centre label themselves indicating a degree of religiosity, as well as other religious groups such as the modern Orthodox, religious Zionism, and Conservative and Reform Jews in Israel.

Ultra-Orthodox

The ultra-Orthodox community in Israel consists of approximately 450,000 people, "all of whom adhere to a particularly strict interpretation of a guiding text of Judaism" (Livio & Weinblatt, 2007, p. 30). Ultra-Orthodoxy in the Israeli context is all-encompassing and governs the various aspects of private and public life in ultra-Orthodox society. This system relies on textual and rabbinical interpretation of societal norms and is gender segregated with accepted roles for men and women, which are atypical of Israeli society and also of ultra-Orthodox communities in Diaspora.

> The ultra-Orthodox community is very tightly organized around the strict observance of the *Halacha,* that is, the Old Testament and the Talmud that are preserved as the supreme ultimate guiding texts that direct the life of the community. Community members differ from the secular westernized public and from the religious Zionist public in their dress and their daily practices that ... [isolate the] community from its "heretic" surroundings...only middle compromises with modernity are allowed, if at all, from general society. (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005, p. 31)

For example, Livio and Weinblatt point out that

> ultra-Orthodox leaders have approved the use of unique "Kosher phones" marketed to the community by an Israeli service provider, and nicknamed thus because they do not allow users to engage in controversial activities such as Internet use, reception of messages from contact providers, and text-messaging. (1999, p. 31).

Using this type of technology has implications for religious and social control mechanisms as they relate to technological innovations, potentially a weak spot in a cloistered community.

The typical role for men is to learn religious texts and for women to be both providers for the family and caregivers for their children. In other words, women are responsible for the household in every possible sense, doing both paid and unpaid labour, and the men are occupied with Judaic learning. The ultra-Orthodox community in Israel grapples with

internal and external pressures to integrate with Israeli society on a number of levels and constantly challenges the place of religion in society in order to create a homogenous community, which is free of external influence. One of many reasons for this withdrawal is a growing measure of control through self-segregation as many in the ultra-Orthodox community feel that growing consumerism and materialism, which are prevalent in secular society, have a threatening impact on the everyday lives of the ultra-Orthodox community.

In the utopian dream of the ultra-Orthodox community, the goal and drive of society are measured in spiritual gain rather than by material possessions. This perspective presents both a social and a religious attitude contributing to the withdrawal of the ultra-Orthodox community from the secular mainstream.

> Consumerism, the ultra-Orthodox say, is the fourth in a series of trials visited upon the Jewish people in recent history…. First was the Enlightenment…perceived as a spiritual disaster.... Then…the Holocaust, a physical trial, unveiling…the falsehood of the Enlightenment and brutally reducing the number of Jews.... Zionism is a national disaster that offers yet another false dream of rescue and revival. The current disaster, the trial of luxury/consumerism, is, according to a leader of the community, "no less of a threat. It looks innocent, and it is aimed towards a much weaker generation than the previous ones. (El-Or & Neria, 2004, p. 72)

A widely accepted version of Jewish asceticism is unique to this context and has wide-reaching impact on the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel, which has developed very differently and has taken on a different form from similar communities elsewhere, both spaciously and temporally.

Description of the ultra-Orthodox community and life

The balance of life in the ultra-Orthodox community is determined by following biblical precepts or rabbinic interpretations, which ultimately come down to positive and negative choices through which all modes of social and religious interaction can be interpreted.

> Within ultra-Orthodox society, daily life is governed by a series of Jewish laws known as mitzvot. These laws cover everything from the segregation of the sexes, distinct clothing, living in a defined geographic community, sexual relations, and ritual purity. Men are encouraged to study the Bible, Jewish laws, and commentaries well into adulthood, while

> women are often responsible for the family budget and for rearing children. Modern conveniences such as television, computers and even mobile phones are viewed with suspicion. (Devi, 2005, pp. 15–16)

The goal is to have the positive commandments of the religion and aspects of codified Jewish law protect the core values and precepts of Judaism, thereby allowing individuals living the prescribed lifestyle to have an easier time fulfilling the various ritual aspects of observance.

This concept becomes more pronounced as members of the ultra-Orthodox community seek to increase the "protective fence" surrounding key elements of religious observance by increased Orthodoxy in all aspects of daily life on both personal and communal levels. The increased Orthodoxy has the net effect of widening the gap between traditional Jewish observance and new stringencies and places a new barrier between the ultra-Orthodox community and the rest of society. This is done to pursue a balanced and perfect society in which biblical precepts are followed as the *de rigueur* law. In many cases, since this is not possible, as the ultra-Orthodox community represents a minority and the majority are either secular or traditional, ultra-Orthodoxy has sought to withdraw from the public sphere in order to create a society in which the ultra-Orthodox community can flourish without the threat of assimilation and integration into the larger, more secular Israeli society.

These new values lead to a new form of Jewish Orthodoxy, which creates a new paradigm in Jewish observance. Imagining moving beyond this point is difficult.

> The real question is what it would take, emotionally, culturally, and politically, for Orthodox and Haredi leaders today to develop their own version of a normative Judaism that works for them and their people, but could also somehow embrace the universal values that are so critical to coexistence. (Gopin, 2002, p. 109)

Due to the Orthodox influence in Israel determining such key areas as Jewish identity and the personal sphere, the ongoing shift towards more Orthodox interpretations of religious values has become increasingly contentious with other groups contesting the increasingly restrictive policies of the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities. Certain values that play a major role in the various aspects of the ultra-Orthodox community are very different in the Haredi ultra-Orthodox context in Israel than in ultra-Orthodox Jewish groups elsewhere. Key elements of the social makeup of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel are the values

regarding social prestige, which generally relate to men studying full time and essentially living in poverty or great financial difficulty.

> In the ultra-Orthodox community, social prestige resides in religious studies, a domain inhabited exclusively by men. Mundane matters are ranked as secondary and entrusted to women, albeit under strict social control. As a result, many married [ultra-Orthodox] women are both homemaker and breadwinner. (Blumen, 2002, p. 133)

Blumen goes on to note that "religious male unpaid work takes priority over the hegemonic capitalistic value of paid work. Hence, in accordance with women's subordination in the gender prestige system, paid work is assigned to women" (2002, p. 135). Since women are normally responsible for all forms of work, and as a result, they often leave the home or the community to engage in employment in secular society, developing a focal point of interaction with secularism that men may not at all be exposed to. Ultra-Orthodox women, therefore, often become the public face of Haredi society when they are out in the generally secular world of employment. **"**In out-of-community female workplaces, ultra-Orthodox women are exposed persistently to modern values of work and femininity that run counter to the values of their community, forcing them to negotiate their femininity and social belonging" (Blumen, 2002, p. 135)

Menashe Blum makes an interesting point identifying the debate over helping alleviate the symptoms of poverty versus directly changing the conditions to change poverty itself. Many aspects of ultra-Orthodox life inherently lead to poverty. As the interview participants stated, there is simply no other option for someone living in a society that does not have access to jobs for various reasons or does not have access to education for various reasons, where one is expected to follow a certain pattern of life, have many children, and so on. All these factors can combine to create a great deal of poverty, and, as a result, the community has to look inward to establish structures that support those in the greatest need. Unlike a similar structure in the Diaspora, which is integrated into the job economy to a greater degree, in the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel, new solutions have to be found to create economic opportunity within the confines of the ultra-Orthodox world. This does not necessarily mean that the ultra-Orthodox community has to turn outside; rather, new possibilities are able to be created within the community itself while still adhering to religious standards and preserving the ultra-Orthodox community's way of life.

> *Well, I guess, I think you mean like welfare and things? I think a Jewish community has an obligation to help the weakest parts of their society. The question is, I think, the general society is asking, we're willing to help the lower stratas [sic] of the community, but is it because they want to be like that? Do they have no other option, no other choice? I think that's the issue. Should we be helping people to continue living below poverty, not to help them get out of poverty? That, I think, is the issue. And in a Haredi community, the two—it's not so simple, you have to live in poverty because of the way you want to live. A Torah life, being in kollel and having children, whatever, you have to live in poverty; there's no other option. So now the question is, do you starve or does the outside community help? And I don't think anybody in Israel is going to be willing to let people starve to death. I think it's a type of issue that the community itself, the Haredi community itself, has to come to grips with—that they are in poverty and their children are suffering. And they have to find a way out of that suffering.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

Originally, Blumen explains, "the yeshiva educated a small, intellectual, religious elite, exempting selected students from their worldly burden. Separation, it was hoped, would ward off modernization and protect the old lifestyle" (2002, p. 135). But, he continues,

> in the West, and later in Israel, most Jewish immigrants joined the modern middle class, signifying a new era of voluntary Jewish-ness…. These modern Jews, reluctant to see the old-style community disappear and aided by the principles of the modern welfare state, willingly financed the ultra-Orthodox minority as a "society of scholars." (2002, p. 136)

Haredi society is organized in an attempt to maintain real or imagined communal and societal values, which are preserved as fundamental and integral components of the ultra-Orthodox community internal structure. In many cases, however, such as the overarching development of the Haredi community in Israel, there are products of various secular policies by the Israeli government that date back to the creation of the state and are unique to this context. This can be understood through the use of other developmental indicators, such as class divisions between the various religious groups in Israel. Normally in other capitalist democratic societies, such as the United States or Europe, the ultra-Orthodox community has integrated, though not assimilated, to a great extent and has become generally very successful utilizing various modes of success such as education, the development of a particular work ethic, etc. to succeed in their adopted societies.

Due to state support and the ethos placing priority on Jewish learning as the highest achievable goal in the ultra-Orthodox community, the Israeli context is very different, and religious men do not strive to attain the trappings of the middle class; rather they seek an aesthetic lifestyle of learning. Various symbolic steps towards becoming part of the franchise

in society, such as property ownership and material success, are of less importance in the Israeli context among ultra-Orthodox Jews as they seek to establish a de facto community and preserve its borders within the context of the larger Israeli social and political environment. According to Gopin,

> [The] great obsession [of Haredi Jewry in Israel], and the roots of its deep separatism, is a response that is similar to other fundamentalists, namely, the strong perception of fear of cultural annihilation. The contemporary materialist society continues its assault every day on their children and their ethics and pits itself squarely against the separatism that the ultra-religious see as their only hope of maintaining their religious lives for as many millennia as their ancestors did….Their greatest fear is to fail their ancestors and their descendants, to be the ones who lost the continual line of devotion to the Torah. (2002, p. 110)

It is important to note that the particular version of Judaism under discussion regarding the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel is Rabbinic Judaism. Loosely defined, Rabbinic Judaism emphasizes textual interpretation and presents a detailed daily plan of life creating standards and a code of behaviour that is reiterated throughout the society. This can be seen in numerous ways such as the emphasis on “the religious deed, Torah study, and large set of ethical and ritual acts, which comprise one’s spiritual relationship to God and the community” (Gopin, 2002, p.235). According to Rabbinic Judaism, the minutiae of everyday life build up to be incredibly important factors within communal norms. Gopin explains further:

> [Rabbinic Judaism is] a transformation of Biblical Judaism that occurred over a period of many centuries before, during, and after the beginning of the Common Era; a hermeneutic rereading of Biblical religion that is so complete that it effectively becomes the standard Judaism until the modern day. It emphasizes the religious deed, Torah study, and a large set of ethical and ritual acts, which comprise one's spiritual relationship to God and the community. (2002, p. 235)

Zionism poses an upset to the longstanding traditions of Judaism by combining secular political movement with a religious tradition that does not necessarily contain within it inherent political organization. As a result, the fundamental Jewish value of hope has become changed and in some ways co-opted to serve other purposes, and the belief in the

redemption and the Messiah has taken new forms in both spiritual and political terms. This is understood to be an inherent threat to the ultra-Orthodox community that views the redemption and the coming of the Messiah as key elements of its belief system, which cannot be exchanged for temporal rewards unless they are God-given.

> The emergence of Zionism as a secular political movement actively seeking to return the Holy Land to Jewish sovereignty constituted a formidable theological dilemma for Orthodox Jews, a dilemma which has been aggravated by the Holocaust and by every Zionist success. While the return to Zion had been at the core of Jewish hopes for redemption for two millennia, it was never expected to materialize through the this-worldly efforts of heretics who [have] strayed from the fold. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 138)

The combination of secularism overlaid on Judaism that emerges in Zionism is also worrisome to the ultra-Orthodox community as this combines deeply seated values and could potentially lead to greater assimilation.

Changing values about the interpretation of Rabbinic Judaism and how it has reacted to secular forces have led to, in recent history, a withdrawal from secular society and newly imposed barriers concerning what appears to be a corrosion of values. These values, traits, and communal norms and attempting to utilize textual sources and apply them to everyday life have long been of utmost importance in Rabbinic Judaism. When this is not possible for a variety of reasons or if the patterns of life are changed through new pressures from society, this becomes an even more difficult challenge and places the ultra-Orthodox community at odds with their secular contemporaries.

Modern Orthodox

Since the Enlightenment, a moderate stream of Judaism has developed called Modern Orthodox. Modern Orthodoxy, also called Centrist Orthodoxy, strives to maintain a balance between liberal, secular values and integrating aspects of these values into religious life. Modern Orthodoxy is, therefore, less formal in structure than ultra-Orthodoxy and seeks a moderate accommodation through less rigid religious structures that govern every aspect of life.

> Modern Orthodoxy is broadly defined as the effort to adapt Orthodox Judaism to modernity and to avoid the social and/or cultural isolation which living in strict accordance with halakah

> would seem to impose....There are Orthodox Jews who... are able to do so by ignoring those aspects of halakah which they find most cumbersome or onerous and/or by a process of compartmentalization in which they apply Jewish law to some, but not to other, aspects of their lives. Some of this is accompanied by feelings of guilt, sometimes not. (Liebman, 1998, pp. 405–406)

Cohen and Susser note that

> those described as modern Orthodox adopted a more positive, accommodationist attitude towards the contemporary world. Although they retained a resolute loyalty to Halacha (the body of Jewish scriptural law), isolation per se was not viewed as a virtue. Modernity, they would say, is not necessarily inimical to the religious life; properly pursued, it creates significant opportunities for religious self-realization. Whether through selective adjustments to Western culture, or by compartmentalizing life into religious and neutral zones, or, most ambitiously, through synthetic interpretations that compound modernity and tradition, the objective of modern Orthodoxy is to live authentically in both worlds simultaneously. (2000, p. 3)

The modern Orthodox perspective seeks the guidance of rabbinic leadership to define and interpret the boundaries of Jewish law and custom as they apply to their community while seeking to accommodate the secular attributes of society, such as education, requirements of citizenship, and integrated communities within the majority. According to Stern, “modern Orthodoxy has argued that a Jew can simultaneously be a committed religious person and be engaged in...culture, politics, and academic life” (2002, p. 49). This is in contrast to the policy among Israeli Haredim of placing the primacy of religion above all else and withdrawing from mainstream society.

Modern Orthodoxy presents a vision of political and social compromise that allows adherence to the strictest moral and religious standards of Rabbinic Judaism, yet at the same time, allows for accommodation and engagement with secular society.

> One of the effects of this outward movement has been in an increasingly emboldened challenge to the authority and legitimacy of modern-Orthodox Judaism, the basic outlook of which has been the object of relentless criticism among Haredim. Haredi teachers, rabbis, and other agents have also been at the forefront of pressures within Orthodox Jewry to devalue

> the practice of socializing with cultural others and the pursuit of secular studies and professional careers. (Stolow, 2010, p. 45)

While there are forms of engagement within the Diaspora Jewish communities, which term themselves Modern Orthodox, the disparity between the Haredim and Modern Orthodox groups in Israel cannot be directly compared to similar distinctions in the Diaspora. This is because Modern Orthodoxy in Israel can adhere to a far greater degree of religiosity than would be possible in other contexts.

> Setting up a secular Jewish society in *Eretz Yisrael* (or anywhere else for that matter), where Jews could be safe and prosperous, was a worthwhile undertaking, although it had no bearing on the hoped-for messianic redemption. Orthodox Jews, according to this view, should actively participate in this undertaking both because of its intrinsic value and because their participation could mitigate its secular character. This position has been associated with "modern orthodoxy," a tendency that in general has sought limited accommodation to modern secular society. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 138)

Modern Orthodoxy is distinct from Religious Zionism, as discussed at length elsewhere, due to the fact that Modern Orthodoxy seeks to strike a balance with secular modernity not out of religious motivation but rather because of emphasis on very different values than are ascribed to the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. Modern Orthodoxy does not maintain a core belief in the inherent religiosity of the state, and Modern Orthodoxy may, in fact, mirror many sentiments in agreement with the generally ultra-Orthodox position regarding Zionism in Israel.

Conservative/Reform movements in Israel

Other streams of Judaism, which are more prevalent in the Diaspora, are the Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist movements. Despite ongoing pressure of Israeli governments and the constant struggle to gain recognition, these groups do not have legal status in Israel. Their rabbinic leaders are not recognized and are not included in the consociational balancing that regulates the balance between secularism and religion. There are a number of reasons why groups such as the Conservative and Reform movements have not gained a foothold in the Israeli context, including the small numbers of Conservative and

Reform followers. This essentially creates a paradox in which these groups are unable to gain recognition for a lack of numbers, yet are not afforded the rights and privileges of other recognized religions in order to gain more followers.

> Religious pluralism was never a part of the complex system of compromises and arrangements that governed Orthodox-secular relations. Part of the reason relates, no doubt, to the very small number of Conservative and Reform Jews in Israel....Despite their vast power in the Diaspora, the liberal wings of Judaism are repudiated by Israel's Orthodox rabbinical establishment without qualification or hesitation. (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 121)

This constantly shifting boundary, of the Diaspora dictating and often influencing policy, is not as clear on the issue of religious policy.

A key difference between Israel and the Diaspora is a degree of involvement in religious affairs by the Jewish population. The numbers of affiliated Jews who maintain membership in non-Orthodox communities is significantly higher in the Diaspora than it is in Israel as the traditional majority picks and chooses the various observances that it follows and for the most part is not involved in religious life. For many Israelis, government services provided through the personal sphere, such as for burial, marriage, conversion, divorce, etc. are sufficient if services are obtained through ultra-Orthodox rabbis. Therefore, non-Orthodox groups challenge ultra-Orthodox stringencies and the status quo arrangements, which seek to form compromises, without either side actually compromising on its key positions.

Government acceptance of non-Orthodox Jewish groups would be for the ultra-Orthodox akin to a complete separation of the church and state as control over the private sphere would no longer be in Orthodox hands, and Judaism would become open to increased individualism and a new host of religious options. This creates an interesting paradox as Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews are a minority (approximately less than 10%) in the Diaspora, and other religious groups or non-affiliated Jews make up a majority of the Jewish community outside of Israel (Stolow, 2010, p. 205). The quandary for Israel, then, is extending religious privilege and maintaining an equitable balance of religious freedom of society to Jews from outside Israel whose religious preferences are not acknowledged as viable options in the state of Israel. “Representatives of the Reform and Conservative movements...have been battling for years for more rights in Israel” (Brownfeld, 2010, p. 49).

The ongoing debates about religious policy in the private sphere, recognition, identity issues, and numerous other aspects of religious policy are key issues of contention with other streams of Judaism and could ultimately lead the charge against widespread reform in this area.

Where in the past minor inroads have been made in Israel in terms of recognition for non-Orthodox religious groups, these compromises are often extremely contentious and very rarely held in force in any significant way.

> Demands by non-Orthodox rabbis for recognition and funds for their congregations are viewed by the Orthodox as challenges to their religious establishment.…However, there has been an increase in the number of Reform and Conservative synagogues and schools which have received financial support from the government and quasi-government organizations. (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 160)

Though there has been some movement in this area, the advances are generally insignificant when compared to the government funding the ultra-Orthodox community receives. According to Dowty,

> one threat perceived by Orthodox circles in Israel is a "softening" towards non-Orthodox (Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative) forms of Judaism. In the past the general public attitude toward these movements, even among secular Israelis, was fairly negative, and only a tiny percentage of the public joined non-Orthodox congregations. This has been changing...beginning in 1989 Reform and Conservative Jewish movements won a series of court cases regarding government funding, membership in religious councils, recognition of non-Orthodox conversions, and provision for non-Orthodox burial. (2001, p. 175)

Recognition of alternative streams of Judaism would essentially redefine Israel as a Jewish state and would play a key role in transforming the various ongoing social debates regarding the place of Judaism in society, the egalitarian practice of Judaism, and a new epoch in Jewish development for the state of Israel. Major shifts in this area are unlikely in the short term as the ultra-Orthodox minority maintains great enough influence and voting power to keep a firm grasp on religious affairs in Israel. Should this demographic change, for example, with non-Orthodox religious groups making greater inroads in Israel or new waves of

immigration manifesting, the absolute power the ultra-Orthodox community has over religious values in Israel would drastically change, creating a new and more dynamic reality.

Traditional

Traditional Judaism strives to maintain a balance between religiosity and secularism. Unlike the extremes on either end of the religious spectrum, the very Orthodox, or the very secular, the majority of the population is made up of unaffiliated or somewhat affiliated individuals who heavily rely on Orthodoxy for their religious needs; yet they, themselves, are religious to varying degrees. Due to the fact that in some aspects people define themselves as traditional and in others as Orthodox, exact statistics regarding this segment—and indeed all segments of the religious population in Israel—are difficult to come by. Yet all indicators point towards this largest group, the centre of religiosity, to greatly outsize groups on either end of the spectrum.

This is important as "traditional" or more secular elements of society maintain an implicit acceptance of the ultra-Orthodox community's supremacy in religious matters. This is evident from government support and subsidies to the ultra-Orthodox community for the salary of the local ultra-Orthodox city rabbis in every city throughout the entire country. In most of these locations, ultra-Orthodox representatives of the Rabbinate minister, upon demand, to traditional Jews. For both reasons of tradition preserving an idealized version of Judaism through the ultra-Orthodox and the preserved continuity of a religious mode of life, traditional Jews affirm the ultra-Orthodox lifestyle even if they themselves are secular.

> The traditionals are as much as saying, "I may not be rigorously observant, but it is important that someone is. I can go my own way in the knowledge that others remain loyal to and perpetuate the faith"– or, as the political philosopher Shlomo Avineri famously cracked, "the synagogue I don't go to is an Orthodox one." (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 132)

Cohen and Susser go on to explain further:

> Traditionalists want Orthodoxy to be a significant presence in the Jewish state. As long as they can practice in their own way, they are comfortable, perhaps even content, to see Orthodoxy as the official and public representative of the Jewish faith. Ironically, the secular and religious protagonists carry out their vocal confrontation as if unaware of the existence of this large, traditional community [in Israel]. (2000, p. 132)

Social protest movements and other forms of social activism, even when focused on this particular issue, often find their focus divided by the multitude of other issues facing Israeli society and the deep-seated lack of personal involvement many feel towards religion. It is the apathetic majority which essentially supports the informal status quo.

It would normally be relatively simple to ascertain what the differences are between ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox and by extension, what the differences are between various forms of Orthodoxy and alternate streams of Judaism such as Conservative and Reform. Among interview participants of whom this was asked, the answers were interesting regarding the degree of social conformity or disunity with the established positions of the Israeli ultra-Orthodox community. Perhaps this is a function of participants' dual perspective regarding state and religion, which comes from their exposure to a fundamentally different type of state and religion arrangement in the Diaspora.

It is also interesting to note how politics and religion can overlay each other. As Dvorah Nudelman points out, distinction is made between authentic and unauthentic variants of Judaism and through this, everything else is determined. In many ways, this is the same superior view taken of the ultra-Orthodox interpretation of Judaism by the state Rabbinate.

> *My specific [label] is Orthodox—authentic Orthodox Judaism.... [I]f you say National-Religious, so it could be their emphasis is on living in Israel, but I live in Israel, so I don't see that I'm necessarily less—I may not be nationalistic, you know, politically, but that's my—I don't think there's a stream, there's one type of Judaism; anything else is not exactly authentic.* (Interview with Devorah Nudelman, 2011)

A complex idea is whether culture is a function of religion or vice versa. How these ideas fit together makes up the differences that we see in ultra-Orthodox society or, for that matter, in religious society in Israel in varying degrees, such as cultural changes, actual religious practice, and so on. Perhaps it is a combination of both, as Moshe Auerbach discusses the context of modesty (*tznius*) and communal standards. This shows that society is continually forming norms for particular modes of life and is self-correcting to ensure that certain communal standards are met. It is interesting to note that this interview took place with Auerbach, a resident of Jerusalem who has lived in Israel for approximately 10 years. He shows familiarity with the codes and context for modesty within the community, and this shows the importance of the applicability of these codes in the community.

> ***Interviewer:*** *Are we talking about a function of religion, or are we talking about a function of culture or society?*
> ***Moshe Auerbach:*** *No, I think—culture definitely—there's definitely a culture that's, you know, Haredi or Mizrachi, but we're talking about—we're talking religion. And the religion helps to create their culture as well. So I don't know what they would mean when they would say it, even though I'm sure they mean it, but that's how I would say it.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Can you give me an example of what a religious difference would be?*
> ***Moshe Auerbach:*** *Um, it gets complex. I could think, let's say, in certain areas of a—you know, it's the stereotypical example, maybe, let's say tznius. So, in some communities, you see people dressed one way. Let's say they're more covered, and some people dress less covered. Now the one who's less covered might sit here and say—you know, and really less covered. I mean, I see a skirt that barely went to the knee, if that, with the top over here. She's exposing way more than what is allowed, and they also might tell you, I try to keep Torah and mitzvot to the—but that's not the way their grandparents kept it; not in the Sephardic or in the Ashkenazic lands. So they might say the same thing as me, but, you know, this is how I mean it and—I'm not sure why they're saying that or what they mean by that, you know, but that's how I would say it.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *So what you're saying is that you have a more legitimate continuity of tradition?*
> ***Moshe Auerbach:*** *I think in the Haredi world, yeah, for sure. It's much more strict in terms of the Halacha, and it's much more true to what Torah values were supposed to be. It's much more reflecting of G-d's will. Not that there's not issues, but it's much more reflecting of that attempt. I mean, to walk around with, you know, within that example— and I don't want to get into so many examples right now, but walking around within that example of somebody who's not so tzanua (modest), it's just not close to what G-d's will is. So*—(Interview with Moshe Auerbach, 2011)

The nuanced view that Auerbach takes into the role of culture in ultra-Orthodox society is very different from the next interview with Sarah Falk. She notes that while certain cultural differences are acknowledged, behaviour in society generally is governed strictly by textual interpretation. Yet, Falk acknowledges that there is a great deal that is not written down that becomes part of an accepted societal norm, such as what color socks one wears. This is particularly apt in a society with a high degree of social conformity, where people are expected, as a matter of course, to dress in the same fashion, and this would naturally extend to things like socks more so than other outward displays of appearance.

> *Like, cultural is, let's say Hasidish versus Ashkenazi versus—like that's a lot more where you come from and who your—but societal—and I don't really know how to define between the two. Cultural—like there's some who know that—there's some things that aren't within the Torah, like what color socks you wear.* (Interview with Sarah Falk, 2011)

Perhaps the mode of dress and the small differences among the various groups forming the ultra-Orthodox community have a function of distinct appearance as well as relaying a number of social political orientations. In this way, various stringencies can be tied to both religions precepts as well as social dictates. Ruchama Spiegel agrees that appearance

can indicate acceptance of various external influences, such as those of political issues and so on. The interesting thing to note is how a modernized version of ultra-Orthodox society, when asked directly about modern Orthodoxy, is simply unable to answer, showing how the cultural aspect of Orthodoxy can be complex and ingrained within the ultra-Orthodox community.

> *Modern, well, modern Orthodox then would be a question—I don't know. Some of it's how they would relate to modesty issues with women and men and how they interact. And, let's say, Mizrachi is political more, I think, just to how—where the state of Israel fits in their scheme of—their picture of ... Is that religious differences? I guess outlook, if you call that—okay. But I mean the basic premise, I think, is the same. Maybe how they apply certain things, maybe you want to put it that way.* (Interview with Ruchama Spiegel, 2011)

The following interview with Deena Friedberg is interesting as it relates to how difficult it is to judge the religiosity of certain individuals by their outward appearance. Friedberg also touches on the fact that there is a difference between the ways in which religion is practiced in the Diaspora versus how it is practiced in Israel. Even though outward appearances may indicate that someone is secular, this is not necessarily the case as that individual does observe various rituals, which would normally only be associated with the Orthodox community. This adds a greater layer of confusion into the social implications of religion; no doubt they are there, but they just make it increasingly difficult to distinguish among individuals.

> *Even here people who might say they're secular. There was this great story about a rabbi [identifying information removed] that we know who made aliyah, and then he came back to talk about what it was like. And he said one of his neighbors didn't seem to keep much of anything, but come Sukkot, he said he said, "when are we going to build a sukkah?" They were in an apartment complex, so they were going to do it together. He said, "You're going to build a sukkah?" And he goes, "of course," you know. Some people won't do anything, but Yom Kippur, they all go to shul. So it's not so clear-cut. Like, in North America, people are either secular or religious, but here [in Israel] some people keep certain things. There are some people who don't really keep much of Shabbat or whatever, like they can go to the beach or watch TV, but their homes are strictly kosher, they would never dream of mixing meat and milk or anything like that. So, yeah, it's not so clear-cut.* (Interview with Deena Friedberg, 2011)

Despite differences in the ultra-Orthodox world, there are, as Friedberg says, "varying approaches," yet at the same time, the fundamental values and textual references are the same. This attitude tends to show that within the narrowly defined world of ultra-Orthodox society, there can be room for religious pluralism while staying within the borders of religion.

> *Everybody is following Shulchan Aruch. We just have different, maybe approaches, different minhagim, different—we're all trying to follow the Torah, you know, according to your stream or whatever it is. You know, you may have a different color hat. Or if one guy's working, one guy's learning, one guy's in the army—but, you know, we're all attempting to serve Hashem and—you know, using our capabilities.* (Interview with Yehuda Aronson, 2011)

Yocheved Sakes makes an interesting case for the performative social norms within ultra-Orthodox society. Individuals are expected to dress and behave in a particular fashion and more so in the Diaspora. This rigidity is constantly reinforced and reinterpreted in order to maintain standards within the ultra-Orthodox community. It is important to note that these standards do not necessarily stem from religious observance or practice. They may have started as traditions linked to modesty or mode of dress from the Diaspora and morphed in time into a social phenomenon whereby to be accepted, all members of society need to conform to a rigid system of dress.

> *Yesterday I went to an interview in a purely secular mercaz kehilati, and, you know, right away the director called in the person in charge of Haredim. Now I was wearing a pretty good sheitel and I was wearing what I'm wearing today, which in the winter is entirely appropriate. She knew right away who I was. Now I don't think I dressed—you know, and I was wearing, you know, not this on my head. But I don't think I dress particularly Haredi, and, you know, I'm an artist by profession, so I'm pretty—but you know, women especially; men are not as good as that. When my husband walked into his kollel with his captain's hat, which the Chofetz Chaim used to wear such a hat, somebody said, "ooh is that funny, can I wear it on Purim?" In America, they didn't say that. He was the rav, and he used to wear that hat every day; here, you just feel really strict dress guidelines.* (Interview with Yocheved Saks, 2011)

B. Zionism and the ultra-Orthodox Community

The Orthodox community has varying perspectives on Zionism and the secular nature of the state. Within the larger Orthodox community, opinions range from outright acceptance for matters such as military service and involvement in the affairs of state to the other extreme of ultra-Orthodox groups such as Neturi Karta, which refuse to acknowledge the existence of the state and do not participate in state-funded programs or policy.

> This position is held by the extreme, mostly religious Orthodox fringes in the Haredi community, which view Zionism and the state of Israel as demonic enterprises and refuse to have anything to do with them. In recent times the two tendencies described here as "principled accommodationism" and "pragmatic rejectionism" have increasingly been showing signs of convergence, with Religious Zionists becoming more orthodox in their

> religious behavior and Haredim (with the exception of the "principled rejectionists") becoming more nationalists in their political outlook. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 140)

Opinions within the ultra-Orthodox community vary as well. This section examines Zionism and the state of Israel within Orthodoxy and within the ultra-Orthodox community. This is an important element in identifying the currents, positions, and motivations underlying the varied positions of the ultra-Orthodox. Rejection of Zionism varies from a complete and utter rejection to tacit acceptance of the state on a practical level.

This thesis focuses on the largest segment of the ultra-Orthodox community, which generally participates in the political process and various other elements of the state, such as new military programs targeted towards the ultra-Orthodox, job training, and other integration programs. However, despite these various attempts by the state to create a more inclusive and egalitarian framework for the ultra-Orthodox community, some elements of the ultra-Orthodox community reject the state's position for various religious and ideological reasons; those arguments are examined in this section. This section broadly explores elements of the conflicts between the ultra-Orthodox and the state as well as the ultra-Orthodox community and concepts of Zionism and secularism.

The Haredi relationship with Zionism is explored along with a brief synopsis of the history involved and the often contrary opinions some members of the ultra-Orthodox community have towards Zionism as the motivation for a secular state. Furthermore, the issue of Haredim and citizenship as well as the underlying concept of working within the system and the established framework versus non-recognition of the state lead to a discussion of anti-Zionist Haredim and the minority who utterly reject all connections with the state. This section also explores various facets of religious identity and the elements that comprise the arguments made for a particular religious way of life and the differences between the ultra-Orthodox and Religious Zionist outlooks as they pertain to the state. This is intrinsically tied to the concept of the state as a religious manifestation and the Haredi recognition or rejection of the state of Israel on that basis. Finally, this section concludes with an analysis of the Haredi will to rule, which is essentially an examination of the larger scenario and motivations of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. This ranges from a continuation of consociational policies maintaining balance in society (as evidenced in the various forms of

"status quo arrangements") to a newfound political system based on religion in which ultra-Orthodox religious prescriptions are followed by the entire state.

> Based on their religious fundamentalist beliefs, [the ultra-Orthodox] argue that the redemption of the Jewish people, its re-concentration in the Holy Land, and the eventual establishment of a Jewish sovereign theocracy should not be expedited by any political movement, not to speak of a secular-national movement like Zionism. Rather, Jewish redemption and revival, according to this view, depend on the coming of the Messiah. Therefore, both Sephardi and Ashkenazi Haredim reject the legitimacy of the state of Israel, which, according to their leaders, was founded and developed by the despised Zionist Movement. On a symbolic level, none of the Haredi factions and associations celebrate Israel's Independence Day, they tear and burn the Israeli national "Zionist flag," and ridicule the national anthem. On the social level, the Haredim prefer to live in their own quarters and enclaves – actually self-created ghettos – and abstain from mingling with the rest of the Israelis on a social basis, despise and denigrate secular and national-religious ideas, and reject Western culture, especially "Americanization." (Sheffer, 1997, p. 131)

One of the key elements in understanding the motivations of the ultra-Orthodox community is the separation of the ideological and practical motivations of Zionism. In many cases, there is a tacit understanding and acceptance of practical elements of relations with the state. This includes aspects such as receiving funding, participating in the political process, educational institutions funded by the state, and so forth. However, for many in the Orthodox (and ultra-Orthodox) community in Israel there is a clear separation between Judaism and the Zionist portrayal of Israel as *a* Jewish state or *the* Jewish state. This distinction becomes more pronounced further along the spectrum towards ultra-Orthodoxy, yet is apparent in various forms across the Orthodox community at large. Separating elements of Zionism to its ideological and practical-based components is a process constantly in flux. An example of this is the observation of particular religious stringencies, applicable only in the land of Israel. These particular observances predate Zionism by many hundreds or perhaps thousands of years (Dawson, 1989, p. 65). These various observances clearly mark a distinction between a return to the biblical land of Israel and the creation of the modern state, though there are common threads that connect the two ideals (Bard, 2005, p. 64). The dual nature of

existence between the practical and the spiritual also serves to divide the practical aspects of the state from the conception of the biblical land with religious overtones.

Another example is the concept of a redeeming messiah; the redemption and return to Israel (as a religious land) are key elements and central tenets of faith for religious Jews. Maimonides, a preeminent medieval Jewish philosopher, references this as one of his key articles of faith (Angel, 2011, p. xviii; see Kraemer, 2010). The establishment of a Jewish theocratic state following the return of the messiah is contingent upon religious events and is, in the opinion of many Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox adherents, not at all related to the event of secular nationalism that created Zionism and the modern state of Israel. In this view, Zionism represents a shortcut, skipping the biblical promise alluding to a land of Israel that would resemble a version of religious hegemony for a secular nationalist state founded in a period of secular nationalism with very different motivations.

As a result of this fundamental disagreement regarding the very nature of the country of Israel versus the biblical land of Israel, the Haredi public demonstrates self-seclusion from the public sphere to varying degrees. The ultra-Orthodox community sees the underlying focus of its objection to an Israeli society that seeks to pursue secular and materialist pursuits unrelated to the furthering of traditional Orthodox Jewish values. In short, it views this as an effort to integrate its way of life though assimilation and integration. From this perspective, secular Israelis are not meeting their divinely ordained purpose and, therefore, are unable or unwilling to strictly adhere to many religious observances.

In the same vein, some Haredim object to the use of Jewish symbology and elements of Jewish identity as key elements in the creation, shaping, and formulation of Israel as a Zionist state. By using the philosophy and co-opting and linking historical Judaism and practice to state values, some Haredim feel that Zionism has co-opted elements of the Jewish experience, which has existed in the Diaspora for millennia. For example, “on the political level, the Haredim negate the legitimacy of the ‘Zionist State,’ reject its right to regulate the lives of those who reside in the Holy Land, and do not obey most of Israel’s civil, and even criminal, laws” (Sheffer, 1997, p. 132). Bridging these two extremes are Religious Zionists who seek to mitigate the changes to traditional religious observance of various elements and maintain that the modern state has a degree of religiosity. The way in which Zionism is interpreted as having religious elements and the way in which Zionism captures various

religious features (and the inherent religiosity of the state) are among the central disagreements the various ultra-Orthodox in Israel have.

1. Haredi relationship with Zionism

The Haredi relationship with Zionism and the belief in the modern state of Israel as a religious identity connected through religion to the ancient biblical land of Israel are subjects of great disagreement among Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel. A former leader of Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel was adamant that "the Jewish people are still in exile, until the arrival of their redeemer, even when it is in *Eretz Israel*" (Stadler and Ben-Ari, 2003, p. 21). The symbolic difference between Eretz Israel, the land of Israel mentioned in the Bible, and the state of Israel, which Zionism announces as being the Jewish state and the Jewish homeland, call into question the various key definitions of what "Jewish" really means. Zionism's position as a secular nationalist movement is that the Jewish state can maintain its Jewishness without necessarily involving religious observances and practices. For the ultra-Orthodox, the observance and symbolism of the strict interpretation of Judaism is a key element in observing how they interpret the commandments and God's will. At either end of the recognition of Zionism and complicity with state policies on various levels, all Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews interpret the demands that the state places on them through the lens of religious Orthodoxy. This can very easily put the various sides at loggerheads and can exacerbate the ongoing tensions present between state secular priorities and those of the religious community in Israel on a multitude of fronts. Shafir and Peled note that

> the most common Haredi...position [is] distinguished by its rejection of ideological, though not necessarily of practical, Zionism. Most groups that adhere to this position, organized in 1912 as Agudat Yisrael (AY), have been grudgingly willing to take part in the Zionist enterprise on a limited basis without endowing it any theological legitimacy. (2002, p. 139)

They go on to point out that

> their co-operation with Zionism has been motivated by...the defense of their own material interests in a society where all material resources were controlled by Zionist organs. In that sense, co-operating with the Israeli State (or the pre-State Zionist institutions) was similar to

> co-operating with non-Jewish government in the *galut* (exile), although the former is viewed by some Haredim as a greater abomination than the latter. (2002, p. 139)

Moreover, Shafir and Peled conclude that "[their] other consideration was similar to that of the Religious Zionists, namely, an effort to minimize as much as possible the violation of Jewish religious codes in the society as presently constituted" (Shafir & Peled, 2002, pp. 139–140).

The following interviews illustrate how in Israel, unlike in the Diaspora, many of the tensions and problems in society come from these similarities, rather than dissimilarities, among members of society. Perhaps the very different way in which individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community are exposed and contact members of the outside world creates a more difficult situation where members of the ultra-Orthodox community seek greater methods to protect their identity. It seems as if there is a slippery slope in maintaining identity in a strict and rigid sense against something that seems almost similar yet has so many differences, such as commonalities of religion and language, whereas in the Diaspora, the differences are much more clearly delineated. In a sense, the ultra-Orthodox community has to carve out meaning and purpose for its religious practices and way of life within the scope of the secular founding ideology of the state.

Taking a small part of the Zionist experience and trying to reinterpret it through the ultra-Orthodox perspective in dealing with the many inherent conflicts this creates is no simple task. Yitzchak Cohen seems to suggest that a unique rift in this context has formed in the aftermath of the Holocaust and has resulted in an ongoing clash between the secular and ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel. As he suggested in the interview, this is the fundamental difference between secular-Zionist ideology and core ultra-Orthodox ideology. This perhaps is why there has been an ongoing and deepening rift since the time of the founding of the state, and this rift has deepened as religious and secular elements of society have drawn further apart.

> *I think that when you live in a society and a culture where everybody is Jewish— I mean in Israel you're talking about, you know, I don't know what it is, 70 to 80% of the country is Jewish, and regardless of the Arabs that live there, certainly the Jewish population and the areas where they live, are close to 100% Jewish. I think those— so every suburb across Israel that you have Jews, it's pretty much dominantly Jewish. You're going to encounter all different clashes between the different types of Jews and the different backgrounds because*

> *you have just Jews, and everybody's kind of at each other's throat. Now, it's hard for me to explain what that means, but I'll contrast that with America.*
>
> *America, you're dealing with, really, a whole different demographic, and I think that's really what creates the problem in Israel that you don't find over here. We're talking, Jewish— you know, the ultra-Orthodox living in one place, the secular Jews living in a completely, entirely different place. In fact, some of them may never see ultra-Orthodox Jews in their lives, and certainly, I think—an even stronger factor, is that in Israel, the secular—how do I say this— Israel—this is really a much stronger answer, and I think this will help you here. The state of Israel was founded on a very secular cultural perspective. You know, this is Israel, this is our new country. We're going to leave the shtetl behind, we're going to leave the whole idea of the old Jew, the cultural Orthodox religious Jew behind—we're going to start a new Jew. And because of that, there's a certain—I don't—I hate to use this word, but it's—it's a bit of strong word, but there's almost a certain hatred towards the Orthodox, or especially the ultra-Orthodox Jew and the way they look, and the way they conduct themselves, that the state was founded on, in order to put the past behind them, the European shtetl.*
>
> *A lot of people believe that the Holocaust came about because of the way the Jews looked and the way the Jews acted. So, there was a certain infusion into the education system, in terms of building the kibbutzim, that Haredi Jews is how we don't want to be. Haredi Jews is not how we want to look, or act, or be. We are now a new country. We want to be just like everybody else. So, you don't have that anywhere else in the world because there was no one educating people to hate the ultra-Orthodox. There is no one telling them that this is not how we behave. And this was infused into the state of Israel, the founding of the state of Israel, and you still have plenty of it. There is a humongous rift between the secular Jews and the ultra-Orthodox Jews, and, therefore, anything that the secular Jews can find to put down the ultra-Orthodox, and view them as being less than good, to view them as something wrong with them, will happen. And certainly even from the ultra-Orthodox side, because it was founded with these principles, which is very anti-religious, anti-keeping of the Torah, anti-following in the ways that they view Jewish people should be behaving, they—from their standpoint, also put down the state of Israel, also view the state of Israel as something that's corrupt and something that they should stay away from.… And because of that, I believe all the problems that exist between the secular and the ultra-Orthodox came about, and that is why there is a massive rift, and both sides continue to contribute to this hatred and to this distance between the two sides. And you won't find that here because living in America, the secular Jews are not judgmental, necessarily, of Orthodox. They're just ignorant and don't know any better. They were brought up secular, they don't feel anything for ultra-Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox should keep to themselves. So you don't really have the same kind of feelings that you have in Israel.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

It is interesting to note that for many, the individual practice of religious rights is, from the ultra-Orthodox perspective, trying to impinge on the freedoms of the collective group. This is also the case vice versa; in light of this, Menashe Blum points out that there is great dissimilarity in the way in which the ultra-Orthodox community in the Diaspora and the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel function.

> *In Israel it's not like that. In Israel, Haredim look at secular society as: They're trying to destroy my way of life. And secular Jews look at Haredim as: They're trying to destroy my way of life. That's not a live-and-let-live situation. So, it's nothing—there's nothing similar between the Haredi Jews in Israel and America except Halacha. But, the way they deal in*

> *society is totally different. So here an American-Haredi person is a little bit more laid back and he's not as zealous, I don't think, as an Israeli-Haredi person.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

2. Haredim and citizenship

Citizenship, as perceived by the ultra-Orthodox community, is complicated and contains within it many nuances. The concept of belonging to and participating in the implicit social contract of citizenship often comes into conflict with the ultra-Orthodox perspective. As part of the social contract, many responsibilities are placed on the ultra-Orthodox community and on Israeli society at large, in which some of the ultra-Orthodox do not participate in many respects. At the same time, citizenship generally can be viewed as "rights and responsibilities together as essential for any kind of citizenship" (Schattle, 2008, p. 33). The convergence of opinion among the ultra-Orthodox community is to maintain the status quo and occurs for a number of reasons.

The vast majority of the ultra-Orthodox maintain citizenship and participate, to varying degrees, in some state processes, ranging from health care to varied levels of engagement with the employment sector, voting, and so on. They do not, however, generally participate in military service or other forms of engagement that change the social and religious status quo. It is important to note that a small minority of the ultra-Orthodox community, particularly among certain sects of Hasidim, disavow any participation in and acknowledgment of the state and refuse all forms of state funding. However, these are an extreme, though vocal, minority.

Generally, in the ultra-Orthodox community, there is tacit acceptance (or muted protest) on various issues ranging from taxation, health care, voting, and the like. Other sensitive issues, such as military service and involvement in the secular education system (such as teaching the core secular curriculum in religious schools) have many in the ultra-Orthodox community in favour of non-participation, as this is perceived to be strictly concerned with the larger affairs of Israeli secular society. Through time, however, a shift has occurred where elements of the ultra-Orthodox community have acquiesced and adapted to certain elements of obligations through citizenship. These obligations include financial, political, and other motivators in exchange for maintaining certain privileges accorded to citizens of the state. While many state programs and functions do lend themselves to some

forms of compromise, for example, in the case of teaching some elements of a secular curriculum in exchange for increased funding, these are half-hearted compromises when many members of the ultra-Orthodox community still maintain an ideological and, at times, religious divide from the state and its policies.

One of the key issues facing the ultra-Orthodox community in terms of citizenship and the rights and responsibilities inherent in this implied social contract is the symbolism of the ultra-Orthodox community participating in the affairs of the state. Many believe that this would imply tacit approval of secular government policies that for both religious and social reasons the ultra-Orthodox community does not wish to adopt. It is, therefore, the choice of the ultra-Orthodox community to accept and participate in certain elements of society and not participate in others. Over a long period of time, this strategy of increased Orthodoxy and partial involvement may have evolved from "forms of cooperative behavior that are passed on as superior strategies when it comes to the distribution of resources and survival (of the individual and the group)" (Mallet, 2011, p. 2). This then creates a new mechanism of dual existence with secular society.

Devorah Nudelman touches on defining the Jewish state in the context of Judaism versus nationalism, or asking if they are indeed the very same thing. The context of being Israeli is clearly different from being Jewish. In fact, a percentage of the population does not only identify as being Jewish but belongs to other major religious groups. Israelis, however, define themselves as living in a Jewish state. Therefore, there exists an inherent conflict between the definitions and the perception of someone in a secular country. This occurs even more so when individuals who profess to be from the ultra-Orthodox community examine the situation where they are Israeli by definition living in Israel—they live in the Jewish state—but unlike their secular compatriots, they practice a stringent standard of Orthodox Judaism. This, therefore, puts them at odds with secular Israelis who find that they are able to maintain both a Jewish cultural nationalistic and religious identity. This is perhaps akin to Israeli citizens who are not necessarily Jewish or for that matter, do not necessarily identify with national holidays of Jewish origin simply because it is not part of their religion. This shows a complex issue that exists in Israel and forms the crux of the inherent conflict in Israeli identity.

> *But that's—but then we're getting back to the original point, that the laws are based on not-appropriate foundations. If it's a Jewish country, it shouldn't be, am I Israeli or Jewish?*

> *You're Jewish; it's a Jewish country, it's not—what an Israeli—oh, Israelis like being an Italian? No, an Israeli means you're a Jewish person, and it's a Jewish nation —that's the nationalism, is the Jew—is the Yiddishkeit, is the Judaism. Not the, I'm an Israeli, so I eat falafel and I, you know, watch Beitar, whatever they're called, you know. That's not nationalism—that's not Jewish nationalism. Jewish nationalism should be, here we have a Jewish country, we have—what are the public holidays? The public holidays are the religious holidays.*(Interview with Devorah Nudelman, 2011)

One of the key elements of citizenship for the ultra-Orthodox population is the rights and privileges accorded to all citizens, chief among them voting rights. The high concentration of voting power in ultra-Orthodox voting blocs gives the population a disproportionate swing vote on certain key social issues. By maintaining various elements of citizenship and not having them tied to obligations of the state, the society has created a stronghold of religious voting power, which, in essence, creates leverage for the ultra-Orthodox community to negotiate various sensitive issues.

Currently, for many in the ultra-Orthodox community, there is a dual existence: They participate in some elements of larger Israeli society as citizens and at the same time are supported by the state to learn Judaic texts as their profession. This dichotomy sets the worldly obligations of the individual against the other-worldly considerations of the ultra-Orthodox yeshiva, striving for merit in the world to come. The current trend has been greater engagement with the larger secular society, which creates a difficult duality for many to face in terms of not only religious strictures and observances but for the fundamental question of citizenship and its implications. Sheffer explains:

> The growing Haredi communities…also provide a considerable challenge to the existing notion of Israeli citizenship. As in other religious fundamentalist communities and groups, there are splits in the attitudes in Haredi communities towards the rights and duties involved in being Israeli citizens. But while many of the Haredim expect to enjoy all civil and social rights Israel grants its citizens -- freedom of association, movement, speech, participation in the political process, housing, health services, support for their independent educational system, etc., these groups are far from accepting and fulfilling the duties of other Israeli citizens. Most important, they do not serve in the army, on the whole they do not pay state and local taxes, and, although they are forced to comply with Israeli laws and regulations, most of them do not recognize the supremacy of the Israeli parliament; above all, they denigrate the entire legal system and particularly the Supreme Court, which they regard as their archenemy. (1997, p. 136)

Blumen explains further:

> Initially, ultra-Orthodox Jews reinforced their anti-Zionist, distinctive, elitist identity, strictly eschewing state support in politics. However, as population growth threatened to erode the economic base of the "society of scholars," they began to bargain for state support and political power. Legislation introduced benefits such as stipends for married *yeshiva* students and privileges such as exemption from military service for all religious women and *yeshiva* students" (2002, pp. 136–137).

He adds that "modern Israel supports the non-productive existence of the [ultra-Orthodox] community, not only because of its political power (nearly 7% of the voters), but also because of its symbolic value as a unifying canon of Jewish past in a society of immigrants" (2002, p. 137).

3. Anti-Zionist Haredim

Anti-Zionist Haredim are typified by three central groups, Neturei Karta, Satmar, and the Eda Haridit, although there are a number of other smaller groups as well. All of the aforementioned groups have extreme views on Zionism and disagree on the current organization of Judaism in Israel and the legitimacy and place of the state in the context of a religious outlook. The belief of these groups is that the state is inherently fraudulent and possibly evil, as it was founded on principles of secular conquest and secular state formation rather than on religious principles. It is important to note that a core tenet of Judaism is the messianic redemption and renewal of the land of Israel. In the opinion of these groups, this is a far cry from the current state of Israel.

Anti-Zionist Haredim, who are a vocal minority of Haredim in Israel, go beyond ignoring or not participating in the state and its functions and actively protest against, rebel, and refuse to participate in affairs of the state. They do so as they believe that religious strictures and dictates encourage and hasten the arrival of the Messiah (Green & Silverstein, 2003, pp. 247–267). This belief stands in stark contrast to the current state of affairs (in secular Israel), which the anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox see as both a threat to their way of life and a threat to the hope of the messianic redemption of the Jewish people (Waxman, 1987, pp. 175–192).

Their refusal to accept Israel as a Jewish state comes from many different issues. Chief among them is their strict interpretation of Judaism and what it means to be Jewish. The key elements are the inherent religiosity of the state, the secular nature of Israeli society, and the liberal views of the secular majority towards Judaism and its observances. The Neturei Karta movement "derives its name from a passage in the Talmud which refers to those who devote themselves to the study of Torah as the guardians of the city" (Reich, 2000, p. 282) and seeks to establish a religious hegemony in the Land of Israel heralded by the coming of the Messiah. Until such a time as God establishes the Land of Israel, they view the state of Israel as an abomination, which has attempted to circumvent the larger plan of religion and has established a state against God's will. They, therefore, work with various groups and movements to oppose the Zionist enterprise and the version of Judaism that Zionism promotes. This is particularly true in the links between Zionism and Judaism where many aspects of ancient Jewish ritual observance in history are co-opted by Zionism in order to create elements of the Zionist state. This is why Haredim seek not only to maintain a policy of noncontact and involvement with Zionists and Zionism, but they also believe that the Land of Israel would be best served by having foreign rulers until the dawn of the redemption. While this minority numerically makes up a very small fraction of the overall ultra-Orthodox population, they are extremely vocal and, therefore, have a greater degree of visibility and public presence than their numbers would otherwise support.

> Neturei Karta is a group of religious extremists who live primarily in the Meah Shearim sections of Jerusalem and in Bnei Brak. The group adheres to strict Orthodox views and follows the lifestyles…brought to Israel from Eastern Europe. Their dress codes are traditionally long coat and black hats of Eastern European origin. They oppose Zionism and have refused to accept Israel as a Jewish state. They oppose the use of Hebrew language for…communication because it is the holy language and because to do so would imply acceptance of Israel as a Jewish state. (Armstrong, 2001, p. 340)

They believe that the Jewish state can be established only by God. Neturei Karta strongly oppose Israel and have indicated a willingness to work with groups such as the Palestine Liberation Organization and Arab states that oppose the Zionist enterprise (Reich, 2000, p. 282). Avruch explains further:

> From the perspective of the most extreme ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionists, the Neturei Karta or the Satmar Hasidim, the whole idea of a Jewish state explicitly not ruled by *halakah* is a simple one: it is an anathema, apostasy and abomination. It is not a "Jewish state" at all, but a "state of Jews" -- and bad Jews, at that. The state of Israel simply carries forward the rebellion against God that Zionism established. And just as Zionism brought upon the Jewish people divine punishment -- the Holocaust itself, in the most extreme views of some in this camp -- so, too, does Israel's very existence invite further retribution. Thus, diplomatic isolation, political setbacks, wars, terrorist attacks -- the very same things that messianic nationalists see as a task by God to allow Israelis to prove their redemptive worth -- are viewed by Haredi anti-Zionists as proof of God's continuing displeasure and his impending wrath. (2001, pp. 151–152)

The Neturei Karta International explains its basic tenets:

> One of the basics of Judaism is that we are a people in exile due to the Divine decree. Accordingly, we are opposed to the ideology of Zionism, a recent innovation, which seeks to force the end of exile. Our banishment from the Holy Land will end miraculously at a time when all of mankind will reunite in the brotherly service of the Creator. (Neturei Karta International, undated/Herriot, 2009, p. 249)

Telushkin adds that

> the Neturei Karta regarded "Ben-Gurion and the Zionist leadership as heretics, the moral equivalence of the ancient idolaters condemned by the Torah. In the years before Israeli statehood was declared, they repeatedly affirmed their preference for being ruled by either the British or the Arabs; what mattered most to them was that they not be ruled by Jews less religious than they" (2008, p.177)

It is important not to underestimate the fundamental arguments of anti-Zionist Haredim. While they do not reflect the majority of Haredim in their stance—the majority of Haredim to one extent or another acquiesce on practical grounds with the state, for example, using state services such as health care, social insurance, and educational stipends—there is a great deal of acceptance of anti-Zionist movements within the ultra-Orthodox community as they are champions of what is seen as core Jewish values that push back against the Zionist transformation of these values in the modern Israeli state.

> The inhabitants of Mea Shearim are not altogether opposed to... [the Neturei Karta]. The...movement dedicated itself to important affairs that interest all of the quarter's inhabitants. For example, this group walks through Mea Shearim twice a week with a large sign proclaiming that the daughter of Israel must dress modestly. The Neturei Karta is opposed to the desecration of the Shabbat by non-religious Jews: they block the entrances to the neighborhood before the day of rest begins in order to prevent cars from driving through it on this day (Meijers, 1992, p. 40)

Moreover, "one routinely sees Missives posted on Mea Shearim's walls denouncing the government, equating Zionism with Nazism, and condemning local residents by name for various 'sins,' such as installing televisions in their homes" (Telushkin, 2008, p.177). These actions put up barriers, both real and imagined, separating and isolating the ultra-Orthodox community from Israeli society.

4. Facets of religious identity

The ultra-Orthodox community as it currently exists in Israel is, to a great extent, a newfound social creation. This social order has formed in response to various external pressures. This organization of society represents an entirely new social paradigm, which in many ways reveals the inherent contradictions to an increased policy of Orthodoxy. While many in the Orthodox community claim a direct link to the distant biblical past, as well as more recent elements of Jewish history, this bypasses the creation of the state up to the present day. In fact, increased Orthodoxy, both in the contemporary period as well as throughout history, has been a reaction to increased secularization and changing societal values. Increased Orthodoxy can become a key element of identity, shifting focus away from preserving the modes and rituals of daily life to a focus on Orthodoxy in and of itself. For many in the ultra-Orthodox community, and perhaps in the larger Orthodox world, the concept of Israel as a Jewish state, and a mostly secular state, is a reason to increase Orthodoxy and "go to the mattresses" (Fußinger, 2012, p.13). The divisions that exist among the various ultra-Orthodox groups vary with the character and composition. Overall, many of these religious groups share common elements. Among ultra-Orthodox groups, there is an increased tolerance for radical elements to operate within society. This is evidenced by fringe

groups, such as the anti-Zionists, who adhere to a strict standard of religiosity counter to the ideology of Zionism (Porat, 1992).

While anti-Zionist groups are discussed in this section, it is important to note that radical elements within anti-Zionism extend far beyond political disagreements with secular society. This can include disagreements over religious textual interpretation, rabbinic leadership, fundamental core values, and priorities. There is a great deal of tolerance for radicalism in the ultra-Orthodox community as the radicals use dialogue within the context of the larger ultra-Orthodox Judaism to claim legitimacy for their cause. For example, in advocating for stricter observance, fringe groups speak out, with great force, about the generally unspoken sentiment within the ultra-Orthodox community to be more proactive in religious matters in the larger context of Israeli society. The majority of the ultra-Orthodox community is generally hesitant to cross the borderlines between the ultra-Orthodox community and the irreligious population outside of their insular enclaves (Heilman, 2000, p. xx). However, movement in this regard by various radical groups has proved immensely popular within religious circles and thus difficult to silence by ultra-Orthodox leadership. Through this ongoing drive to reshape ultra-Orthodox Judaism, a new ultra-Orthodox identity is being formed, with its key characteristic being the willingness to engage in various forms of conflict. This is done to preserve the national soul and character of religion, and to engage in new conflicts with various competing forces such as secularization or Israeli *laïcité* (Charbit, 2009), Zionism, and secularizing influences.

There are, of course, many other social issues among Jews in Israel. These other issues are generally perceived as far less important, from a social standpoint, than the divisions between the secular public and the ultra-Orthodox community. This is because classic examples of dividing lines in Israeli society such as the division between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews are slowly being bridged. As intermarriage rates between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews increase, and the stigma against the promotion and inclusion of Sephardic Jews—due in part to the Ashkenazi character surrounding the formation of the state and European influx—comes to an end.

For example, Yonatan Smith shows how one option for integration is through marriage, and this can be seen through multicultural integration. He notes that his family can see this because of their perspective coming from, in this case, the United States, and they

see the place for integration through having an overarching national or perhaps social identity.

> *I would say in the past it was definitely something that was of concern. But I think we're going in the direction—in the positive direction where everyone is accepted for their own viewpoints. And as an American, I'm more open to that. I mean I have my in-laws. I have two married children and both sets of in-laws are Sephardim and to me that's fine and it's great. I have no problem with that because we're looking at the individual. We're not looking at Ashkenazi or Sephardi or Hasidic or Litvish or things like that.* (Interview with Yonatan Smith, 2011)

In contrast, Yoav Daniel points to the sense that inequality exists. This is perceived as being something that still does exist. While it may be difficult to create change, it is no less challenging to create a new perception around inequality.

> *I think it's improved a lot, but I have a feeling that it's— there are certain places where it might be a little bit harder. I have noticed that there are certain places where there are too many Ashkenazi names, and I think that there must be something going on, but as an outsider, I don't why—I don't know for a fact that that's true in the army. I have a feeling that it's true in the army, that they're— that Sephardim are under-represented in the officers ranks. I went—what was it? There was—I guess—a think tank, or something, and I was noticing that all the names were Ashkenazi. I looked at 20, 30 names, and all of the names were Ashkenazi, and I was starting to think, what's going on here?* (Interview with Yoav Daniel, 2011)

Not all see parity in society, as evidenced by the following interview excerpt, which casts a very pessimistic view on the equality between Sephardim and Ashkenazim in society.

> *Unfortunately, no. The Sephardi community is very much oppressed. They are treated racially like a lower class here.* (Interview with Miriam Jacoby, 2011)

It is important to note that the Sephardi population in Israel currently makes up a far greater percentage than in most communities in the Diaspora (Safran, 2005; Roumani, 1988). This means that with changing attitudes, a greater degree of equality, understanding, and inclusion has made inroads in the ethnic divide. However, this cannot be said of the divide between the far extremes of religion and secularism. These are two intractable positions that essentially hold the middle (the majority), which ranges from secular to traditional to religious, hostage. The traditional centre is subject to the whims of the various religious and secular minorities arguing their case for state involvement. In other words, the fundamental debate is over the degree of entanglement the state has in religious policy and bureaucracy. Dowty notes that this is "far more than the Sephardi/Ashkenazi split, the conflict between the varying demands of religious observance is the most potentially disruptive threat to the unity

of Jewish Israel" (2001, p. 159). A key example, at the most basic level, is agreeing on a definition of what "Jewish" actually means.

Israel, as the Jewish state, seeks to represent Judaism though the paradigm of Zionism. Yet, from the perspective of the ultra-Orthodox leaders who currently influence religious policy, the distribution of the population, based on religious tendency, is vastly skewed. A minority of the religious community using an ultra-Orthodox interpretation (of the fundamental meaning of Judaism) creates conditions for religious regulation. In other words, a small minority, highly regimented and organized, has a great degree of religious authority over the mostly uninvolved majority, regardless of religious affiliation (as it relates to the private sphere). Therefore, the majority of Jewish Israelis neither fall into the ultra-Orthodox category nor into the completely secular category as many pick and choose their observances on an individual level, yet are controlled in various aspects by religious policy.

> The division of Israeli society between religious and secular, however, does not conform to a dichotomous divide...Three major cultural orientations and three major publics, rather than two, can be discerned. Surveys conducted in the 1990s point to the existence of a large middle category...that includes respondents who describe themselves as "traditional" or "non-religious" compared to a minority who would define themselves as "secular" or "religious." The religious-secular divide...is a continuum in which most people select the rituals they participate in and the commandments that they obey. (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 31)

The breakdown on these divisions is not clearly defined. According to Dowty, "the dichotomous division of Israelis into 'religious' and 'non-religious' has been superseded by the common, threefold self-classification as 'religious,' 'traditional,' and 'secular' (or 'non-religious')" (2001, p. 177). This division represents a construct which is in many ways imagined and representative of a spectrum with many gradients.

Unlike alternate forms of religious and social organization among Diaspora Jewish communities (such as the Reform and Conservative movements), in Israel the majority is not necessarily organized. In some respects, the observances of the traditional centre could represent that of the ultra-Orthodox community or something closer to complete secularism. Picking and choosing various religious observances runs counter to the ultra-Orthodox view of an overarching dominion of scriptural-based (and rabbinic enforced) religious policy. This way of life governs not only individuals and their observances, but also every aspect in both

the private and public sphere. As far as this crosses over into the territory of law and policy, the personal sphere in Israel, which, for the most part, is concerned with marriage, divorce, burial, and status, relies on ultra-Orthodox interpretations and stringencies. While this is not the case in the public sphere, the influence of religious policy can be felt there as well. The difficulty reconciling these two disparate conditions lies in the very meaning of Jewish identity and an understanding of what that identity means. This definition is in flux as the determinants behind it are shaped by various social and political considerations. This is true in many different social environments in Israel. Within the parameters of a religious context, in a nationalist context, in a societal context, and in a cultural context, the lines between public and the personal have become blurred.

In this changing or shifting perception of the public and private, perhaps the context of an enclosed society amplifies the effects of uncertainly and a loss of control and identity. The ultra-Orthodox community presents uncompromising standards in its observance and cultural practices in order to hold the line and push back against secular integration. What is interesting is that the vast majority of Jewish Israelis follow some aspects of these dictates insofar as their personal and public life is concerned.

> At the extremes, the Haredi or ultra-Orthodox groups tend to isolate themselves from the rest of society and strictly observe the commandments. For most other Jewish Israelis, a bricolage of beliefs, identities, and practices can be observed. Jews who visit shopping malls on Sabbath, a secular practice that defies a religious commandment, will often decline to define themselves as secular and are likely to obey other commandments, *kashrut* observance, for example" (Ben-Porat, 2008, pp. 31–32)

The clearly defined separation of three distinct groups along the spectrum of religious observance in Israel is touched on in the following interview excerpt. From one side, the ultra-Orthodox, to the opposite side, secular, and the traditional Jews in the centre, Miriam Jacoby notes that secular Israelis are completely "allergic" to religion. Therefore, the two polar opposites are fundamentally incompatible. The centre, where most traditional Israelis are grouped, is a meeting of minds between the extremes of religious Orthodoxy and secularism.

> *It's been my experience with Israelis that you have—there are three kinds of Israelis. You have Dati Israelis, who are—whatever, they are religious, they understand, et cetera, you have Masorati Israelis, and then you have completely secular Israelis. And unlike secular*

> *American Jews, secular Israelis are allergic to religion—like they break out in hives if you come near to them with a kippa, or tefillin, or anything. It's kind of creepy. (Interview with Miriam Jacoby, 2011)*

An interesting idea is how it is easier to maintain a religious identity in Israel because of the shared commonality between all Israelis, both secular and religious. Deena Friedberg discusses the commonalities rather than differences related to religious observance among what is perceived to be all Jews in Israel.

> *Well, because it's a Jewish country, you know, and, like—when I was in […identifying information removed…], I was teaching in a public high school for a few years before I made aliyah. And then—like, they knew about Rosh Hashanah and they knew about Yom Kippur. And when I said I needed to take time off for Sukkot, the secretary kind of freaked out; what, another Jewish holiday? You know, not that I care for myself, but my son is in medical school […identifying information removed…] and I'm afraid his professor's going to take off so much time. I said, well not everybody takes off for this holiday. And then, like, I took off and then I came back the next week and then I said to her, well, was your son's professor there? And she said, yes he was. But it was just this kind of thing—people having to leave early on a Friday. It's like, here, it's like—even secular people still say chag sameach because it's still their chag. So to me it's just a lot easier.* (Interview with Deena Friedberg, 2011)

It is possible to look at religion on both the macro and the micro levels. This is perhaps a reflection of attitudes from someone in the Diaspora looking at religion in Israel. In a Diaspora, where religiously observant people are fundamentally different from their fellow citizens in terms of religious observance, it is more difficult to integrate. From this perspective, being in Israel, which publically supports Jewish holidays, for example, would be an easier transition. However, once an individual does transition into Israel's many nuanced, social, religious, ethnic divides, the complex social reality can be difficult to navigate. Even more so, within the ultra-Orthodox community, finding one's place can be a daunting social exercise, which may not even be possible as religious social organization in Israel does not necessarily reflect that of the Diaspora.

> *Is it a challenge? I think too much into things. Yes and no. The challenge is, I mean—in a way it's easier to, whatever your identity is, to just be, you know, who you are, because you're in Israel. So if you are Jewish, you are pretty much welcome here, is the feeling that I have. The challenge is if you're coming from outside of Israel, then it's a different sort of system in terms of where you fit, so it's—the challenge is figuring out which sect you fit into.* (Interview with Leah Halpern, 2011)

This follows with the idea that it is more difficult to be religiously observant in the United States. The reasoning is that wearing traditional clothing, such as worn by ultra-Orthodox women, makes it more difficult to be socially accepted by peers from outside the

ultra-Orthodox community. Perhaps both because in Israel the ultra-Orthodox community is more insular as well as the fact that in Israel interactions with the ultra-Orthodox community are far more frequent than they would be otherwise. In North America, there is less pressure to fit into homogeneous community rather than heterogeneous mixed society.

> *I think it's harder in the States. And I went back—before I made official aliyah—I went back to make aliyah, pack up and visit family, and I felt very self-conscious. Well I wore what I'm wearing, and I—on my head, and I felt a little self- conscious. And a couple—one time I went into an office, and somebody said, "oh I like your hat" (laughs). I think that's why a lot of the Haredi women over there wear sheitels [wigs] because you want to look like everybody else. Here you don't have to feel like you have to look like everybody else. It's definitely easy—easier to practice here.* (Interview with Rivka Lowey, 2011)

There are commonalities among coreligionists in Israel even if the individuals in the society are not at the same level of observance. Devorah Nudelman notes that it is easier to be religious in Israel because of the many shared holidays and social nuances, which are observed to one degree or another, across the spectrum of the society, which is not necessarily the case in the Diaspora. This makes an interesting observation about the difficulty of maintaining an ultra-Orthodox lifestyle in the Diaspora and at the same time maintaining a religious affiliation; while it is possible, there are not as many areas of overlap with the rest of the society. Focusing on these commonalities is what leads to this opinion that religious observance of ultra-Orthodox Judaism is easier in Israel.

> *I still think it's easier [to be religious in Israel] because, you know, it's just easier. Because even the—you're on a bus on an Erev Chag and everybody says, you know, "Chag Sameach, Gut Yom Tov," even non-religious people. It's beautiful, you know. And I don't know now about laws, maybe I'm going back to antiquated, you know—taking days off work, you always have to make up for it in chutz la'aretz, whereas here, generally, like we said, it's a national holiday, public holiday, so, you know, it's more—one problem is, so the Erev Shabbos—we don't have a Sunday, like in chutz la'aretz, so, you know, it's a bit more stressful. People are more worn out, we don't have as much recreation time, but maybe we don't need it because then everyone gets into trouble if you have too much recreation.* (Interview with Devorah Nudelman, 2011)

There are also pros and cons, both in the Diaspora and in Israel, even when living in relatively sheltered ultra-Orthodox communities. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to finding an environment where individuals are able to raise their children in a way that fits with their values without influence from the outside world.

> *I could see it both ways. I think that it's very individual, and that's why you see some people who chose to be here and some people who chose to be there. You know—and somehow they understand that they'll be more successful in the place that they are. You know, I know Haredim who have flocked here knowing what the spiritual rewards would be, but I also*

> *know a lot of people who vow not to come. And obviously they're not coming to align with the state, but even to come and live within an enclosed Haredi community they haven't come, and they understand that where they are right now is going to be the place for them spiritually to raise their families. So really, it depends on the family and the person.... I think that the communities in general in the Haredi world make a very concerted effort to be insular because, you know— really, in every country, the children shouldn't speak the language of the streets because that gives them access to the streets. Like we said before, it doesn't mean they should never speak that language, but while they're growing up, they shouldn't have access to the streets. Every child deserves that chance to live a very simple life when they're young. When they get older it might be something else. So here in Israel, there's also that challenge.* (Interview with Moshe Auerbach, 2011)

It is important to gain insight into the nuance between defining oneself and being ultra-Orthodox in Israel. Belonging to a certain social element within the ultra-Orthodox community becomes increasingly difficult and requires dealing with many new issues, which may not be relevant or matter within the context of the Diaspora. As Ephraim Lerner notes, he crosses the boundaries between the elite of secular education and the elite of the ultra-Orthodox world, yet at the same time, perhaps due to his background in the Diaspora, he does not see a conflict between these two disparate worlds. He also notes that an individual needs to spend more time reflecting on how he fits into the social fabric and what exactly this means in the context of his co-religionists who are coming from a very different place in terms of balancing their priorities of religion and secularism within the context of the state.

> *You want to find your niche, if you will, your particular group that you want to be identified with. And it's so easy, the borderlines are not that well defined and—and I look at myself as a Haredi, okay? But mine—many of my friends might say, "hey, wait a minute, you're a Haredi, what are you teaching in university for?" It doesn't make sense. On the other hand, very secular or modern Israelis might consider me part of them because, thank G-d, I have a very good education and I'm teaching at a high level. So it's nebulous. It's kind of hard to really stake out your place. ... That's a sociological phenomenon right there, because in the United States we have a lot of non-Jews…. The fact that you're a Jew in itself makes you stand out, so you have a much easier time defining yourself; it's not so competitive. Here, if you're a Jew, so what? Everybody's Jewish (laughs). So you're going to have a much harder time to really define your particular market, niche, whatever you want to call it.* (Interview with Ephraim Lerner, 2011)

Social creation

When examining the various facets of religious identity in Israel, we see that religious communities are themselves divided on numerous issues. These divisions extend across religious communities of all faiths in Israel, and appear in various forms. At times, these internal divisions run contrary to what would ostensibly be the position most beneficial to the group as a whole. This is particularly true in the context of issues with political and/or

religious significance. Therefore, many decisions made by elements of the community (or the community as a whole), may reflect decisions made with various alternative considerations or ulterior motives.

These issues transcend politics as they become crucial to fundamental belief, identity, culture, and religion. A number of these facets will be explored in this section, which examines the ultra-Orthodox community in terms of a social creation and focuses on issues relating to ongoing fault lines within the community, the essential meaning of Jewish identity in the ultra-Orthodox context, and tensions and clashes relating to sensitive issues. These elements are linked to religion as key factors of identity for the ultra-Orthodox community. Identity and related concepts derive power of conviction and force through various forms of agency and power-related issues through scripturalism and religious ritual. Interpretation of various religious positions of leadership and a brief examination of scriptural interpretation and organization are crucial to understanding the various perspectives related to religious identity. Finally, this section examines the borderlines between religion and various aspects of secularism and the willingness and interest of the ultra-Orthodox community to engage in secular politics in Israeli society at large.

Increased tensions and clashes regarding sensitive issues

"Church" and state relations (or synagogue and state relations in this case) in Israel have always included tensions and clashes (Liebmann & Yehiya, 1983). Tensions have increased related to sensitive issues such as social, religious, and political changes. There are many reasons why the religious–secular divide has become headline news repeatedly during the past decades. Central to the ongoing debate over the place of religion is the idea of the status quo, which regulates a balance between change and maintaining a degree of separation. The conception of the status quo is often a catalyst for social unrest as each side jockeys for position (Edelman, 2000).

The idea of a measured balance, in which each side seeks to use power to its benefit, ultimately creates a somewhat even-handed dichotomy. This solution represents a degree of stability, even though forward-looking progress is not necessarily possible to achieve. This is because the status quo system of compromise relies on a measure of inefficiency in order to maintain stability. In other words, the opposing forces at work, using policies of the status

quo, affect a form of mutually assured destruction in social and political terms (Fox, 1999). This prevents issues of state and religion from changing in a meaningful way outside the scope of state and religion. In this context, each relatively minor issue is raised to the spectre of a national crisis, and doing so prevents dealing with issues at a lower and more mundane level (Peres, 1995). Sensationalism is used by both sides to promote their particular agenda. This approach prevents overall progressive change (Myerhoff, 1990; Lehmann & Siebzehner, 2006). Nevertheless,

> the conflicts to date have been marked more by verbal than by physical violence between religious and secular Jews, and neither camp has been able to score clear victories. This condition seems to reflect the great variety of doctrines within Judaism, including an element of ethnicity that allows even those individuals who proclaim their lack of belief in any Jewish religious doctrines to remain part of the Jewish community. (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 149)

But, according to Dowty, "far more than the Sephardi/Ashkenazi split, the conflict between the varying demands of religious observance is the most potentially disruptive threat to the unity of Jewish Israel" (2001, p. 159). These divisions are long standing, and speak to the very fundamental elements of Judaism. They reflect the larger issues surrounding state and religion in Israel.

These issues, by and large, stem from religious or social incidents and have become politicized. Issues relating to state and religion have become elements of movement on various levels of political and bureaucratic government and administration. The pattern is ultimately to smooth over divisions in order to re-engage with a (newly) formulated, balanced, status quo. According to Dowty, each side recognizes that

> it cannot push the other past a certain point without threatening Jewish unity—which all regard as a supreme value—as well as endangering its own interest. Religious spokesmen deny any intention of trying to use State power to regulate citizens' private lives, while even ardent secularists agree that Israeli State and society should in some way reflect its Jewish roots. (2001, pp. 168–169)

While ultra-Orthodoxy seeks to further politicize various issues to the detriment of secular society and vice versa, the overall progress that has been made since the formation of the

state in the unique context for ultra-Orthodoxy has meant that secularism has increased, and the ultra-Orthodox population has become more withdrawn.

> The conflict [between the ultra-Orthodox and secular elements of Israeli society] is rooted in an old and unresolved question in national identity. “Is Israel a Jewish state, with the emphasis on Jewish, or is it a state for the Jews, a regular, modern, democratic place where Jews are in the majority?” Israel's Zionist founders were almost exclusively secular—in many respects, anti-religious—and they saw Judaism principally as a nationality. But in deference to tradition and as a way of securing the support of the Orthodox minority, they made certain concessions to religion; restricting commerce on the Jewish Sabbath, for instance, and leaving such matters as marriage and burial in the exclusive hands of rabbinical authorities. In the past 20 years, religious political parties extracted further allowances as they joined various government coalitions. (Beyer, 1998, p. 1)

Yehuda Aronson advocates a greater degree of religious education for Israeli society in order to provide more background in religion and related subjects. This would, he maintains, not only provide increased cultural understanding and sensitivity towards the ultra-Orthodox community but also help secular Israelis understand their origins and return to the perceived version of Judaism. This is further complicated by political struggle to find agreement, which politicizes religion and becomes the focus of social divisions and tensions. In essence, the place of religion in society relates to how the state views and relates to religion. From this outlook, the question is: Is this perspective changing, or ultimately, is it still a struggle to incubate the ultra-Orthodox viewpoint into the vision for a modern Israel? Obviously, many things have changed from the creation of the Zionist ideal to the current status quo. How dissenting opinion factors into these issues from both a historical perspective as well as from an ongoing political and social perspective is critical to understanding where things are going in the context of modern Israel.

> *The leaders should get together and—the secular leaders would have a weekend retreat, a Shabbos retreat with some of the, you know, maybe the good martziv (phonetic) they call them now—the instructors, whatever, and have a course in what Yahadut's all about. They should just get it, you know, like here, this is what we're about, this is what we're trying to do, and we understand what you're trying to do, but look, there is conflict over here and let's try to work it out, before it comes— before the issues come up. That would be—that would be helpful. There's still—it's still a political struggle over here. It—I don't see it happening. It's not going to happen. It's not the way Israeli society is built. I'll add another point over here. Knowing a little bit about history and stuff, if you just look at what's going on, you know, right now, you can say, oh yeah, there's you know, secular versus religious. You have to go*

> *back two generations, three generations— you see the continuation of how the Medinat Yisrael came into the founding of Medinat Yisrael, and its leaders, and also the—let's say the European community—you know, what was going on over there, and how they were trying to build Torah communities. And then all of a sudden we got a medinah thrown into our laps in 1948, and each one now took this new opportunity and each one was trying to get their—the most out of it.*
>
> *The secular people were trying to, number one, fight what they believed was anti-Semitism, you know—if we have our own state, we won't have all this anti-Semitism, went back to the Dreyfus trial and all that stuff. And so this was a dream come true for them, a golden opportunity, we have our own medinah. What's a medinah? Lihiyot am chofshi b'artzenu, you know, to do whatever we want. You know, we don't have to worry about this anti-Semitism, you know, but at the same time they don't have any Jewish values at all. Free to do as—what your heart desires. They said oh, we have a mesorah, we still have a Torah and we have a mission, which—and now, if those two things come together—and now it's just a matter of—the beginning of the society was built on conflict already. That is something that can't change. As long as you're continuing—you know, the leaders are continuing in the—well they built—they set up a system of government and the religious are trying to do their thing. This thing cannot be changed. Even if we get a majority—so using their rules we'll beat them at their game, they'll still be—they'll still hate us, they'll still not really understand what's going on. They're still not going to get it, okay, unless there's a basic shift in understanding of what's going on. But the rules as set up—even the way that we elect the government, it's just—the whole thing is built already on what was going on before. It's not going to change, you know, it's not just using the rules that exist will move this way or that way and a little thing here or there. It's not going to change the actual conflict. Throw that into the Arab conflict, so you have an internal conflict, and you have an Arab conflict from the outside, and then you have the general world, the U.N. and all that kind of stuff together, and then you have a nice time bomb that we're sitting on, and that's Jewish history in a nutshell there (laughs).* (Interview with Yehuda Aronson, 2011)

Haredi claim to religion

Among the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel, there is a clear claim to religion as a key element of Jewish identity. This claim stems from a number of beliefs including a continuity in the Jewish people from biblical times until their true descendants—essentially the keepers of the faith—the contemporary ultra-Orthodox community. This can be seen through how “Haredim often style themselves as the she'erit Yisrael [the remnants of Israel], the sole surviving progeny of the original Chosen People, and the unique bearers of Jewish authenticity, who in their everyday lives adhere without compromise to the Jews’ covenant with God”. (Stolow, 2010, pp. 44–45) By representing themselves as the keepers of tradition, the ultra-Orthodox present a moral high ground for the various stringencies and rabbinic interpretations that seek to safeguard their particular way of life.

The interpretation of many of these elements has become progressively Orthodox in outlook due to increased pressure from secular society. The ultra-Orthodox community,

therefore, uses Rabbinic Judaism to maintain an authentic version of the religion, which safeguards tradition and strict interpretation. This serves a dual purpose: to maintain practice and principles of Orthodoxy while at the same time stemming from a fundamental underlying textual base, which shares a commonality to Judaism throughout the ages.

> One cannot take at face value the claims of apologists who describe the contemporary Haredi community as the embodiment of an "unbroken chain of tradition" from Moses at Mount Sinai "down through the most violent and turbulent periods of the past, and to this very day." On the contrary, as we have seen, Haredism is a product of cumulative ruptures, migrations, displacements, and social catastrophes, and as such, its situation is radically distinct from the technological, institutional, socioeconomic, and cultural arrangements of historic Jewish society. (Stolow, 2010, p. 104)

Nevertheless, Orthodoxy becomes easier as society contracts around outside external forces.

Ephraim Lerner makes an interesting case for the amount of outside secular influence that is filtered into the community. Perhaps because of the very nature of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel, which tends to be far more insular than similar communities in the Diaspora, there is less involvement with secularism even if that secularism is not inherently religious, nor anti-religious. It is also interesting to note that the communication method of placing public notices is both powerful and ubiquitous in its message. It shows that even though an individual, a group, or a small minority of the ultra-Orthodox community is putting up posters, due to a lack of technology in the ultra-Orthodox community, posters have become the standard way of communicating with the community at large. It's also in many cases nameless and all-powerful because it represents the consensus in supposedly religious terms of the will of the ultra-Orthodox community. Lerner goes on to say how in the Diaspora this is not necessarily the case and that the Diaspora shows a fundamental underlying tolerance towards things that do not exactly fit in with the ultra-Orthodox community way of life. This is perceived as the line between absolute corruption of the community, or perhaps the perception of where that line is, as far more lenient in the Diaspora than it is in Israel. This makes an interesting case for the threat of integration and assimilation the ultra-Orthodox community feels from secular Israelis.

> *The Haredim here are far more extreme, far more extreme. I'll give you an example. I was again in Bnei Brak—I have family in […identifying information removed…] so I commute. There were signs all over that on Chol HaMoed Pesach they're going to show Jule Verne's*

> *"Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" for free, and all you see is fish and wildlife way under the water. You see greatness of Hashem, of G-d, and everybody should come. The next day, all over the place were these big posters, don't you dare go to this [particular] place. If you do, it's a chilul Hashem, and you're desecrating the word of G-d. Why? Because these pictures were taken by a non-observant Jew who did it on Shabbos, or something like this. It was just so preposterous. In America they'd never give in to that. They'd say, if there's no naked women, what's the problem? It's only fish, you know. So I think in America, they're far more tolerant, far more tolerant. Here's another good example. In America, if you say, I want to be Haredi, I want to get a high school degree, that's fine. Even though many of the yeshivas kind of don't really don't push the—the, you know, high school diploma, but if you want to that's fine. In fact, in […identifying information removed…] Yeshiva, Rav […identifying information removed…] told me that if you cut classes you'll be sent out of yeshiva. Now he's one of a kind. Most other yeshivas, they let you cut. But here, a high school? Are you crazy? I was in a yeshiva here, and they caught some student studying a high school course on their own, and they were thrown out right away. So here they're far more rigid, or strict.* (Interview with Ephraim Lerner, 2011)

Scripturalism

Reliance on scripturalism serves many purposes in the ultra-Orthodox community. From formalizing elements of public communal and private life within the community to relying on rabbinic authority as the ultimate decider, whatever system exists in the various subsets of the ultra-Orthodox community derives its ultimate authority from scriptural interpretation.

> Haredi Orthodox Judaism can be characterized by its emphasis on scholastic and legalistic approaches to Jewish textural sources and by its overarching effort to organize, specify, and extend knowledge about legitimate conduct and about the true workings of the social, natural, and cosmic order, as derived from sacred books. This form of religious "scripturalism" is radical and uncompromising in its promotion of continuous, intensive engagement with canonical Jewish literature and its stringent application in all areas of life. (Stolow, 2010, pp. 51–52)

This leads to increased regulations regarding all aspects of life and a top-down structure of authority in which biblical and rabbinic text are considered to be the highest authority yet often require contextual interpretation by one's rabbinic authority.

> Indeed, the Haredi investment in the text as the sole guarantor of legitimate conduct has been part and parcel with the movement's promotion of stricter norms within the framework of halakhic decision making, affecting what in halakhic language can be called a "swing towards *humra*" (stringency). Haredi scripturalism has thereby served as the gateway to an

> ascendant form of asceticism within modern Jewish society: a reclamation of the pristine authenticity of divine revelation through uncompromisingly stringent interpretations of Jewish text and unqualified embrace of the "hard life" that such readings entail. (Stolow, 2010, pp. 105–106)

In its various forms, this formalizes to some degree the power structure relationship within the ultra-Orthodox community—from the textual sources to the adherence. Adherents seek guidance on all matters of function and behaviour in their private lives as well on a larger scale across the community as a whole.

> The master-disciple relationship cultivated in the yeshiva provides the model for the spread of what in Haredi circles is known as *da'at Torah* (knowledge of Torah): a specifically charismatic source of religious, intellectual, and legal authority that permeates the Haredi enclave...Leading teachers and scholars of the Haredi world are seen to possess esoteric knowledge that authorizes them to issue ex cathedra pronouncements in the realm of Halachah and in all other matters of everyday conduct, "their sole authority being their position as rabbis immersed in the study of Torah"(Stolow, 2010, p. 53).

Stolow explains further that these teachers and scholars

> are known as the *gedolim*: the great Torah sages of the yeshiva world, who stand at the pinnacle of an army of students, cultural brokers, and other agents responsible for mediating their *da'at Torah* through the production, promotion, distribution, explication, translation, vulgarization, application, and defense of Haredi interpretations of Jewish sacred texts. (2010, p. 53)

In terms of leadership, the ultra-Orthodox community has a number of different structures, such as an extremely short progression where one merely has a rabbi to whom he turns for guidance to a longer progression where each successive rabbi will have someone to whom he turns, with the ultimate authority a mutually recognized authority in religious text. Other elements of the ultra-Orthodox community have a more strictly defined structure within their community: Among Hasidim, the rebbe personifies the invincible leadership of the sect, interprets various scriptural references, and represents for followers the ultimate authority for the various scriptural and rabbinic texts. How these directives are applied to all elements of life depends on the interpretation and directives of one's rabbi. Yet the

commonality that all ultra-Orthodox communities share in terms of power-sharing agreements with religion is that Halacha is interpreted and prescribed through both textual references codified in Jewish law as well as through the classical sources of biblical exegesis.

Borderlines

Various borderlines, both tangible and intangible, separate aspects of Orthodoxy and secularism in society. When increased Orthodoxy is viewed as a contraction from numerous external threats that challenge it, such as secularism, integration, and assimilation, coupled with various ideological and religious perspectives on Zionism and the state of Israel, a situation is created where not only does the ultra-Orthodox community seek to preserve hegemony over its customs, values, and beliefs, but also the borderline between their community and the larger unobservant Jewish population becomes blurred. While there is a withdrawal by the ultra-Orthodox from the secular values presented by society, yet at the same time as they believe they have a moral superiority in matters relating to Judaism and ultimately believe in theocratic orientation to governance, their influence extends beyond the borders of their society into the larger public sphere. It is these *loci* upon which the seams of tension and confrontation often appear. Concerning religious observance, blurred lines separate the ultra-Orthodox from the Orthodox communities and from the larger religiously traditional segment of the Israeli population; it is difficult in some respects to draw distinct dividing lines regardless of attempts by the ultra-Orthodox to withdraw from the public sphere.

There has been a concerted effort to withdraw from the public sphere to closed and sheltered enclaves of the ultra-Orthodox community. This is done for a number of reasons and is an ongoing process with the involvement of secular society as a matter of informal policy that has been going on for a number of years. Among the reasons for this withdrawal from the public sphere in terms of wholly religious areas is, for example, the ability to control to a greater degree the immediate domain and to extend Orthodox hegemony within the religious community. This is done through withdrawal from secularizing influence as well as having a greater degree of influence concerning various aspects governing daily life within the local community on both the spiritual and the physical plain.

> Because the absorption capacity of [Haredi]...neighborhoods is limited and the cost of housing relatively high, over the past two decades Haredi quarters have been built in development towns and especially designed towns and suburbs...In these urban enclaves members are provided with all the services necessary for every day community life: *yeshivot*, synagogues, kosher shops, ritual baths, or bookstores. Moreover, they are involved at all levels of managing, planning, and maintaining municipal services. (Stadler et al., 2008, p. 219).

The borderlines are therefore a nexus of ongoing shifting tensions between the ultra-Orthodox community and the external world, both for the greater Orthodox society, the traditional society, and the avowedly secular society as various issues draw the two sides into ever-increasing contact and conflict. Sharkansky explains further:

> Several problems stand in the way of a systemic, quantitative reckoning of who wins specific confrontations over religion, and of determining whether religious or anti-religious interests have been more successful in recent Israeli history. Activists who work for some issues claim that their positions are based on "Jewish norms" or would benefit the Jewish state, but they do not claim that they are religious per se. After a dispute begins there may be public quarrels between Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox rabbis over what constitutes an issue of religious importance and what the correct view of the religious interest is. There is also a lack of unity among authorities in the Christian and Muslim communities. According to one scholar, the issue is an endemic one in political disputes with a spiritual content: one special problem has been in the other-worldly orientation of these deeply religious people; another problem has been religious particularism, where theological disputes have inhibited political cooperation. (1997, p. 161)

5. War: Religious Significance and Interpretation

The various wars that Israel has faced during the life of the modern state have had, for many in the ultra-Orthodox community, religious significance, and overtones. Considering the stance of the ultra-Orthodox community towards military service, this is a very interesting phenomenon. However, taken from the wider perspective of the ultra-Orthodox community, being the guardians of Israel's spiritual and indeed by extension physical well-being, this can be understood. Within the context of Israeli wars, particularly those in 1967 and 1973, the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War, new trends began to

emerge with a re-engagement by ultra-Orthodox community towards Israeli society and vice versa.

> There are several distinct themes in the Haredi literature dealing with Israel's wars of 1967 and 1973…I have divided them into three categories: the first portrays Israeli society in a generally positive light, emphasizing the shared condition of Haredi and non-Haredi society. Themes in this category include the miracle of these wars, the new religious faith or a new potential for religious faith amongst secularists as a result of them, and other positive remarks about Israeli society. The second category includes items critical of Israeli society such as caution about raising renewed hopes, doubts about the depth of religious renewal within Israeli society, criticism of Israeli leaders who refuse to recognize the miracles that God wrought in the wars and more general criticisms of Israeli society. The third category includes themes that, at least superficially, are neutral in assessing Israeli society. They include analysis or description of the wars, their causes and lessons, their outcome and the feelings of depression which followed the Yom Kippur War. (Liebman, 1995, pp. 171–172)

The victories of the Israeli Defense Forces were equated by the ultra-Orthodox as miracles having significant spiritual overtones and being in line with the precursor steps required to bring about the Messiah and the ultimate redemption. These beliefs amongst the larger secular population brought about a period of spiritual reawakening, and religious values were more widely sought than in the past. Here we see a merging of Zionistic values with ultra-Orthodox sentiments related to miraculous military victories viewed through the lens of an ultra-Orthodox ideology. The common bond between the ultra-Orthodox community and secular Israelis was forged by the immediate danger faced by the country. This also relates to the existential threat of an outside force threatening to overwhelm the country. Mutual recognition of both the physical and spiritual nature of guarding the country was certainly raised to a higher position in the minds of Israelis.

> The tragedy and trauma of the [Yom Kippur War] and the deep scars it left on Israeli society would serve, so anticipated, to invoke in Haredi eyes the age-old experience of the Jewish people since the destruction of the Temple. It would make it easier for the ultra-Orthodox to view Israeli society and even the state of Israel as being within the rhythms of Jewish history. This feeling ought to further reinforce a sympathetic attitude on the part of Haredim towards Israeli society. (Liebman, 1995, p.171)

In time, these attitudes somewhat faded, and contemporary thought is often at odds regarding the place of religion and fundamental religiosity of Israeli society. However, this feeling of a shared experience and a basic commonality still unites the ultra-Orthodox community.

Yet, in the context of the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War, as well as other conflicts that Israel has been involved in, many in the ultra-Orthodox community see these (punishments) as a direct correlation for the sins committed by secular or perhaps for all of Israeli society. This common perspective of encountering difficult situations and interpreting them as God's punishment for sins is a coping mechanism that can be understood throughout Jewish history. The attendance of repentance and reform are reinforced through these types of extreme experiences affecting the entire state. It is in this way that these two opposing views can be brought into harmony. Both victories as miracles, as well as wars as punishment, factor into a religious ethos and act as a spiritual barometer for the society as a whole in times of difficulty.

> Frequent allusions to the miracle through which God saved the Jews of Israel in general and the Israeli Army in particular strengthen the Haredi sense of identity with society and the feeling that God cares for the Jewish state. Stressing God's miracles does not diminish the accomplishments of the army or the state in Haredi eyes. First of all, miracles are not inconsistent with human accomplishment. Second, miracles point to God's sympathy for an undertaking. In the Haredi mind, this has more positive value than human achievement. By associating Israeli achievements with miracles, Haredim are able to celebrate Israel's victories because they have legitimated within a religious context. (Liebman, 1995, p. 172)

6. The Will to Rule

The concept of the will to rule for maintaining control over various aspects of the Israeli state is difficult to conceptualize with a fractured populace governed by an uneven consociational equilibrium. In regards to the ultra-Orthodox community, there are "sharp [tensions] between its rhetoric, which states strict adherence to its religious fundamentals, and the change in reality" (Hakak, 2009, p.115) There is a barrier, which must constantly be re-imagined separating the ultra-Orthodox community from external secular forces, that is adaptive in a way that allows for some forms of societal advancement while at the same time maintaining a strict status quo. This is done for numerous reasons, most importantly to prevent assimilation and intermarriage, seen as widespread among secular Jews in general

and to a lesser extent among secular Israelis. “The [will to rule]...tendency is viewed as especially problematic where there are no constitutional separations between public and private spheres or where fundamentalists from competing traditions claim the same ‘identity defining sacred spaces’” (Billings & Scott, 1994, p. 185). The ultra-Orthodox community, therefore, feels that its brand of Judaism is the only legitimate and lasting source of religious continuity, and members of the community are required to maintain this strict line to ensure continuity of Judaism as a religion. This argument puts the control in other matters of politics and society into perspective as the ultra-Orthodox community believes that without its guidance many facets of the religion would be lost entirely.

Besides the religious legitimacy that the ultra-Orthodox community feels that it embodies, the community is generally politically passive. What would ostensibly be political goals with a religious bent, such as bringing about the final redemption or using tools of the state to achieve religious goals, are left aside to more practical everyday considerations. While the belief in redemption and the Messiah are deeply held religious and spiritual goals, in politics, the ultra-Orthodox tend to focus on the present. The legislation and funding arrangements it seeks aim to support the spiritual efforts of the ultra-Orthodox. Unlike Religious Zionists, the ultra-Orthodox community seeks to leave the actualization of the final redemption to a higher power and not become involved with bringing about radical religious changes as this would be presumptive without the appropriate signs.

> The anti-Zionist Orthodox and the ultra-Orthodox Haredim, on one hand, and the religious nationalists, on the other, view *geulah*, Redemption, differently. The Haredim are essentially political passivists. The majority of them hold that the ways of God are beyond the ken of men and that while one must live every minute as though *Mashiach*, the Messiah, will come the next, ultimately it is shameful to try to guess, and sinful to try to coerce, the End of Days. (Avruch, 2001, p. 148)

This relates to one of the fundamental differences between Religious Zionists and the ultra-Orthodox community in terms of the inherent religiosity of the state of Israel and the position of the state in Judaism and vice versa.

The status quo and the ability of the ultra-Orthodox community to attempt to shape certain aspects of public opinion, policy, and so on are possible because of the wide spectrum of Israelis who do not necessarily fit into one category or another. As discussed extensively

in this thesis, there are no clear delineations among various levels of religious observance and Orthodoxy, and while some lines may potentially be drawn, these indicators are not standardized across all the various measurements one would use to identify the population. "The division between secular and religious Jews in Israeli society is particularly interesting because there is no clear definition of who is religious and who is secular in Israel" (Pedahzur et al., 2000, p. 22). Therefore, in terms of religious belief, if not outright observance, many secular Israelis would indeed fall under the umbrella of the ultra-Orthodox camp and may potentially be swayed by certain aspects of the ultra-Orthodox interpretation of Rabbinic Judaism.

An interesting facet in this relationship is that in terms of activity, engagement, or lack thereof with the state, and economic involvement, the ultra-Orthodox sector is often compared to the Arab sector in the way in which its interacts with the state. It is interesting to note that, while there are distinct similarities, the ultra-Orthodox community does not function or act as a minority group in the country. If anything, the ultra-Orthodox community utilizes its numbers to collectively collaborate through voting on certain issues and often sets policy through a large consistent minority disproportionate with their numbers. Perhaps one of the reasons why this is so, is because of the self-realized rule of the ultra-Orthodox community to act as the spiritual guardians of Judaism. As a result, the ultra-Orthodox community feels a responsibility and partnership with secular Israelis even if this is not reciprocal. Therefore, the two distinct sides of the social integration argument are not necessarily arguing from completely irreconcilable perspectives; rather they have the ability to find common ground if their various roles are recognized.

> The Haredim consider themselves the genuine Jews and see the secular as "babies in rapture." They strive to maintain a lifestyle that is religious and distinct from that of secular Jews, while they also practice a (population) expansionist policy, leading to confrontations in mixed neighborhoods over lifestyles...the struggle between the Haredim and the secular Jews is for cultural control of Israeli society. Through parliamentary and extra-parliamentary engagement, both sides strive to preserve the cultural patterns that distinguish them. (Pedahzur et al., 2000, p. 22)

Because of this position, the ultra-Orthodox community views secular Israelis as simply ignorant of the religious dictates and feels a responsibility towards educating,

reforming, and publicizing the spiritual nature of their contribution to the state. A great degree of separation protects the ultra-Orthodox community from external influences. At the same time, there exists an engagement with secular society, in order to promote various political, economic, and social benefits. As a Jewish state, Israel has sought to reach an accommodation and understanding between its secular Zionists and religious Jewish identities. But, when these two often opposing attributes are in competition with each other, is often religious identity and sensibilities based on Judaism (as determined by the ultra-Orthodox community) take precedence. This internal conflict angers many secular Israelis who feel that there is an uneven balance between the religious and secular aspects of the state. At the same time, this fundamental fracture is something that was not clearly envisioned by the early Zionist founders of the state. Their thinking, to include the greatest number of people under the umbrella of Judaism and Zionism, did not take into account the place and politics of religion. This makes sharing religious commonalities between Jews from the Diaspora and those in Israel an ongoing social and political challenge. Within a rapidly developing (capitalist) secular democratic society, which values monetary gain and represents the antithesis of a spiritually dominated inward looking society of scholars, ultra-Orthodox Judaism presents itself as an alternative to secularism and secular values. "In recent decades, ultra-Orthodox Jewry has increased its population whereas modern Jewry is in decline due to assimilation and intermarriage. This bolsters the ultra-Orthodox claim to be the only authentic Jewish identity" (Blumen, 2002, p. 136).

The social structure within the ultra-Orthodox community is designed to ensure a buffer between external influences and the internal influence the community has over its members. In this way, though by no means completely inclusive, a sense of hegemony in spiritual and corporeal manners emerges and is distinctly felt by members of the ultra-Orthodox community.

> This way of life, indeed this form of social existence, trying to create an enclave, a community within a bubble protected from external influences, is a new product of intentional social engineering within the Israeli context. Participation in civil duties, such as National service, or economic activity, is considered a violation of their obligation to Torah study and of community taboos. Most ultra-Orthodox males stay at *yeshiva* until the age of 40, during which time they abstain from military service required of other Israeli males, do

> not participate in the labor force and maintain a modest lifestyle with high dependence on State support. (Stadler, 2007, p. 188)

As noted elsewhere, this has followed a familiar pattern throughout Jewish history in the Diaspora. Yet the traditions being followed in the Israeli context have a new dimension in that the ultra-Orthodox community is now insulating itself from coreligionists. This requires societal effort to establish new patterns of life, new determinations of what is and what is not acceptable practice within the community and within society at large, making a determination of how best to reinterpret and reproduce societal norms, which reflect these stringencies, and often reinterpret potential leniencies in tradition and Jewish law to this end. The act of controlled society, for example, the design and use of public spaces, the type of dress appropriate in the community, and the interactions among members of society (gendered interactions and otherwise), are all representative of creating a distinction between the community and the outside world.

> Another central aspect of Haredi [lifestyle]…focuses on presenting the body in public and, particularly, through the mode of dress. While Western culture, influenced by consumer culture, stresses dress and personal presentation in public as a central site for self-expression and self-realization, in Haredi society, dress manifests the commitment of the individual to God and the community. The distinctive and uniform dress, alongside other external attributes such as side-locks and a beard, are designed to distinguish the Haredi male from his non-Haredi surroundings and prevent him from perhaps being swallowed up and affected by them. (Hakak, 2009, p. 109)

The focus within the community is, on one hand, spiritualism, the pursuit of higher goals between man and God. Yet the performance of these religious rituals takes place within the context of carefully planned public spaces with clearly defined roles for the various members of the ultra-Orthodox community. Creating a distinct mode of speech, dress, education, and perhaps even way of thinking, adds a degree of protection from assimilation and integration into secular society, creating in many cases unsurpassable barriers between the ultra-Orthodox community and its secular counterpart.

Through this process as well, there is a distinct politicization of religion with allegiances being outwardly made towards a code of conduct, re-evaluating the meaning and

context of duty to a higher authority versus the demands of the secular world. The rhetoric relating to these distinctions has been steadily ratcheting up. As can be seen in the section discussing large scale protests, the locus of conflict and the dialog used to express this conflict has shifted from the immediate to the larger spiritual manifestations of secular society attempting to impose its will on religious practice and thought and religious society pushing back against these external influences. The will to rule and the expanding ideal of cultural shift are directly tied to the history and practice of exclusion and inclusion of the ultra-Orthodox community in the larger Israeli society.

Chapter 3
Inclusion and Exclusion

Numerous ongoing processes exclude the ultra-Orthodox community from participating in the public sphere of Israeli society. In some respects, this exclusion is self-imposed as members of the ultra-Orthodox community in various ways decline from participating in the larger Israeli society. In other aspects, secular society has, for decades, discouraged or mitigated the potential contribution of the ultra-Orthodox community to Israeli society (Ben Rafael & Sharot, 1991, p.247). While this paradigm seems relatively stable and relates to the homeostatic process outlined in the theoretical framework, at the same time, an additional process of inclusion facilitates a great deal of power within the ultra-Orthodox community. This includes the bureaucratization of religion, which means that many in the ultra-Orthodox community are de facto involved in creating public policy and law at various levels. This can range from the Knesset, where ultra-Orthodox representatives seek to consolidate power on issues of concern to the community as well as enshrine a particular ethos within the larger Israeli society, to having control over key ministries such as the organs of religious control, which contribute to a great deal of power over the individual in the personal sphere.

This dual process of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of the ultra-Orthodox community creates a unique circumstance. The situation in which the ultra-Orthodox community presently finds itself in Israel and the increasingly disproportionate leverage the community has in terms of negotiating power with the larger secular society is unprecedented**.** Patterns of behaviour in the ultra-Orthodox community can be understood as a replicating system, in which social behaviour is institutionalized and reproduced. Giddens explains this as:

> A society is a cluster, or system, of institutionalized *modes of conduct*. To speak of "institutionalized" forms of social conduct is to refer to modes of beliefs and behaviors that occur and recur – or, as a terminology of modern social theory would have it, are socially reproduced – across long spans of time and space. (Giddens, 1982, p. 8)

Across the spectrum, patterns of inter and intra social conformity can be seen as a dynamic response to internal and external pressures. These responses have a wide reaching impact;

their very existence causes external elements of the system to adapt and change their positions (as can be seen with secular society during debate over religious issues). The preservation of values is a key element to the continued social adaptation of the ultra-Orthodox community. This is done by projecting clear lines of control and attempting to institutionalize social practice. This can be seen in the theory put forward by Giddens: "Many other aspects of social life may be institutionalized: that is, becoming commonly adopted practices which persist in recognizably similar form across the generations. Hence we can speak of economic institutions, political institutions, and so on" (Giddens, 1982, p. 8). These institutions, and the memory they seek to collectively create, extend to religious institutions and the codes governing daily life, to the interpretation and actualization of textual documents. Preservation of these systems and institutions is an integral part of the continuity and preservation of a religious identity, separate from the external world and its influences (Dinstein, 1996, p. 202). This represents a unique occurrence in the context of Jewish history as the ultra-Orthodox community attempts to create a society that is reflective of key values. At the same time, this excludes the many secular Jews who do not necessarily want to participate in the ultra-Orthodox world view. This separation is, however, not complete as the politics of the personal sphere are governed by religious bureaucracy. Therefore, while secular Israeli society at times seeks to embrace elements of the ultra-Orthodox community in order to form a more egalitarian and cohesive society, it nevertheless rejects religious viewpoint and control over the private sphere.

It is important to note that "against the backdrop of perpetual siege, the complexity and intensity of fault lines undercutting the nation...have become axiomatic…[y]et, Israel has maintained a remarkable degree of stability" (Lim, 2009, p. 28). The degree in which these issues threaten the core functioning society is perhaps under- and overestimated on the various sides of these contentious issues. The increasingly vocal opposing forces of Orthodoxy and secularism speak to the underlying conflict of inclusion and exclusion. Through various aspects of consociational arrangements and the various compromises that have been made over time, which at times are made in order to ensure the political prominence of one group or another, issues continue to be fiercely debated on the social and political national playing field.

Israel is unique in its structure and in the way it functions as a democracy. At the same time, it takes into account its unique features, such as its overwhelming Jewish population. What is fascinating about this excerpt from the interview with Yitzchak Cohen is that it notes that the state encourages religion and, indeed, religion is able to flourish and grow under the status quo. What is interesting is that this is far from being a traditional ultra-Orthodox refrain of state interference into internal religious politics and for the many reasons listed throughout the thesis, it is apparent that state-sponsored religion or even religious practice, which is in conjunction with the state, is often highly problematic. This presents an interesting viewpoint, which does not necessarily agree with the way in which religion is traditionally limited or must coexist with the secular state government.

> *That's a good question. I don't know which governments you're referring to, but if you mean any other country, I mean, it's—I would say that in Israel, it's a very unique situation. I mean, you don't really have a country like Israel almost anywhere else in the world. I mean, you have a lot of Arab countries that have a lot of Muslims, but their whole—they don't have a democracy. And then you have countries like the US and Canada and England and throughout Europe, that really are not countries that are like a Jewish country. You don't have a country where it's a unique situation, where it's just for one type of people. So I would not even be able to say that you could compare Israel to any other country because of its very unique situation of, you know— I don't know what it is—80% Jews, but you have so many different types of Jews and so many different considerations. But they do certainly allow for, you know, religion to thrive, and allow it to, you know, grow, and be what it wants to be.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

It is also important to consider the management of expectations. The state can provide a religious experience in many different ways. This relates to how religion is used by the state as a vehicle of social cohesion. Menashe Blum notes the particular way in which Israel, created as a Jewish state, does this. There is an expectation that the state revolves around religious, rather than cultural, principles.

> *I guess it also has to do with the expectations. In America, that type of government, it doesn't expect anything of me, so therefore they don't step on me religiously; I can do whatever I want. But here my expectation as, say, a frum Jew is different. I expect this to be a Jewish state; a Jewish state means Halacha. It doesn't mean just culturally, so I expect more and since I'm not getting that, the government is not a Torah government, then it's not the same as America, it's not the same as another government because I expect more because it's a Jewish state. If it wasn't a Jewish state, I wouldn't expect it, but since it is, I do expect it, at least I expect more.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

A. The Intersection Between Government and Religion

There are many intersections between state and religion in Israel. Unlike numerous other countries that have a separation between religion and state, in Israel, the place of religion is complicated as religion maintains a complex relationship among various aspects of the state.

> *If you have a public school that's funded by the government then, I believe, that they do have a right to decide what criteria they are going to be, and especially if they feel that something is perhaps breaking the law, or something of the sort, if they're going to fund it or not. However, again—you know, dealing with these issues—and really, I—the central issue of all these questions that you're asking is, you know, how involved does the government wants to be in the matters that ultra-Orthodox people are running their lives, and whether or not it breaks the law or, and how they're going to treat it. And I think that when you're dealing with a government that is run, mostly, by secular Jews— whether or not you have Orthodox Jews in the government, I think the majority is ultra-Orthodox— I mean is secular, and there are a lot of feelings between ultra-Orthodox and secular that needs to be addressed and dealt with on their own level. So when you're dealing with these sensitive issues, I think the government in Israel should be sensitive from their side to the Orthodox public in what their needs are and, at the same time, the ultra-Orthodox should realize that they're benefiting and living in a country that allows them to live how they'd like, and needs to abide by the laws of the government.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

This chapter looks at the processes of exclusion and inclusion of the ultra-Orthodox community. It specifically examines the ways in which power is consolidated and used by the ultra-Orthodox community over the remainder of society through bureaucracy and religion. This takes many forms, and there is a pattern of reciprocation that ties Israel as the Jewish state to formalized religion in various aspects such as the symbols of the state and the various cultural and social organizations within Israel—even among the most secular citizens.

Intersections between government and religion primarily focus on the divisions between the various spheres of society with distinct boundaries and the public and private aspects of life in Israel. Yet, there are numerous examples of state involvement in both the private and public sphere in terms of religious policy. Also examined in this section is the topic of civil religion: how the state uses various symbols and cultural constructs in order to create a commonality for Israelis across the religious spectrum and how various governmental policies seek to define the religious basis for the state within both the dialog relating to Zionism and various religious considerations that take aspects of Judaism into account.

> From the dubbing of immigration to Palestine [as] *aliya* (pilgrimage), through the choice of the Star of David and the seven-branch candelabrum (*menorah*) as the official emblems of the

> State, to the celebration of Jewish religious holidays as national holidays, traditional Jewish themes abound in Zionist lore. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 149)

Using Jewish symbolism as a uniting commonality in Israel is a key element to creating and preserving a shared Zionist identity.

1. The Chief Rabbinate

The government institution of the Chief Rabbinate, which is part of the Ministry of Religion, appoints rabbis, has budgetary discretion over religious functions of the government, sets standards, and is the prime vehicle for ultra-Orthodox influence in the larger Israeli society. Control of the Rabbinate is primarily through ultra-Orthodox bureaucrats and functionaries who are directed by their ultimate authority in Halacha, with rabbis taking an extra-political stance where the leaders are not directly state employees. Yet, they are able to have considerable influence over the religious policy administered through the government.

The Chief Rabbinate appoints community rabbis to all interested congregations across Israel, as well as inspectors of kosher food production and kosher certification. They are responsible for the appointment and administration of judges in religious courts and are the ultimate authority for various funding initiatives. In deciding budgetary allocation for religious funding, many factors are taken into consideration. This includes the overall budget for religious purposes, as well as the additional construction or refurbishment of all synagogues, churches, and mosques in Israel (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 152). The internal appointments to these bodies have a critical influence on policy, the stringencies of religious law observed, and the way in which funds and resources are allocated.

Although non-Orthodox religious groups are not officially recognized, there are situations where the government allocates funding or land rights or permits for the construction of places of worship even though a particular group is not recognized. With an increase in religiosity and the shifting of boundaries in society with the ultra-Orthodox trying to stake clear boundaries surrounding sensitive issues, the extra-governmental leadership of the ultra-Orthodox community often makes controversial decisions in sensitive issues regarding conversion, the question of Jewish identity, personal status, the performing of

marriages, divorce, and burial. In some instances, there are certain issues that allow a citizen to turn to the civil courts, for example, in the case of civil litigation. This option is not possible in issues of the private sphere, such as marriage or conversion. The widespread effects of religious hegemony in the Rabbinate can be felt in all aspects of society and equally affect religious and secular Jews across the spectrum as aspects of Jewish law as interpreted through ultra-Orthodox standards are turned into governmental policy. “Haredim have taken up more positions within the official Rabbinate Authority; that has made policies on conversion and dietary laws more stringent, impinging more intensely on the lives of secular people” (Beck, 2010, p. 24). Therefore, as Dowty points out, “the power of the Rabbinate in matters of personal status, marriage, and divorce impinges on every Israeli, no matter how secular” (2001, p. 170). This control affects individuals through the personal sphere in a very different manner from the way religion is used in the public sphere. As a result, individuals face religious government bureaucracy on their own, rather than as a collection of individuals with collective power.

2. Spheres of Religious Influence

In terms of public policy stemming from the dictates of the ultra-Orthodox interpretation of Judaism, many aspects of the personal sphere that relate to marriage, religious status, burial, and so on are overwhelmingly controlled by religious policy. Among the contentious issues in the personal sphere, for example, are questions of valid conversion. It is interesting to note how this differs from the public sphere (see Barzilai, 2010, pp. 27–40). The dominant force of the ultra-Orthodox community in the Rabbinate is very clear in only accepting ultra-Orthodox standards and stringencies related to the application of governmental policy and religious law. Unlike many other aspects of laws based on Judaism, for example, the Passover law, matters of the personal sphere are not general laws that affect society as a whole; rather, they are elements of bureaucratic policy that change in regard to ongoing redefinition in the ultra-Orthodox community regarding these matters. The burden to prove Jewish status, for example, is, therefore, much more difficult in terms of qualification and burden because of the ultra-Orthodox interpretation of religious dictates and the subsequent application of these religious issues in government policy (Brownfeld, 2010, p. 49). The liberal outlook the majority of secular Israelis take on personal matters relating to

religion is often nullified by religious policies, for example, those that prevent nonreligious marriage such as civil unions or various status issues, which are determined by religious qualification. Religious involvement in the personal sphere is present in Judaism through the increasing influence of the Rabbinate (Sheffer, 1997, p. 119), as well as by other religious governing bodies for the other recognized religions in Israel.

Personal

Only religious marriages among coreligionists are possible in Israel. “Had the choice of non-religious marriage been available to Jews in Israel, Orthodox Jews would have refrained from marrying non-Orthodox ones because of their concerns that religiously illegitimate unions, sanctioned by civil courts, may have occurred in the candidate's family's past” (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 142). Because individuals cannot have civil marriages, intermarriage is not permitted, and there are many complications when couples attempt to use the civil court system for divorce as there are religious implications. However, it is interesting to note that marriages performed outside the country and considered valid in the jurisdiction where they are performed will subsequently be recognized in Israel. Many couples that are unable for various reasons to obtain authorization from the Rabbinate to marry in Israel marry in a foreign state in order to have their status recognized civilly in Israel (Fox, 2008, p. 242). This is done in numerous places, but it is particularly prevalent in Cyprus because of that country’s proximity to Israel.

Under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, Israel recognizes these marriages performed in foreign jurisdictions because of international agreements. In this one particular aspect, there is a degree of separation between church and state: Within Israeli territory, all marriages must go through the religious authority, yet marriages performed outside the country are recognized, and aside from religious considerations, put on equal footing with religious marriages performed within Israel. This is of particular impact to Israelis from the former Soviet Union who are often not recognized as Jewish by the Rabbinate according to ultra-Orthodox standards. As conversion normally requires a stringent level of Orthodoxy to be compliant with ultra-Orthodox dictates, a compromise is able to be had when these citizens wish to marry. When an individual is unable to obtain consent to marry from the Rabbinate, travel to Cyprus or elsewhere is seen as a viable alternative. The numbers of

citizens taking advantage of this option are staggering. This problematic situation is so widespread, that “by 1996 roughly 20% of all marriages took place outside the official Orthodox framework, either as unrecognized marriages or marriages abroad” (Dowty, 2001, p. 174). This situation allows for options yet limits the availability of marriage options within Israel.

Further complications arise in dealing with the issue of divorce in Israel, particularly with the ability for citizens to obtain divorce in a civil court. Under Jewish law, a husband is able to ask for a religious divorce and remarry even while completing a simultaneous process in secular court, while the woman is not able to obtain a religious divorce through the secular court (Woods, 2008, pp. 33–34). A woman in this situation, where she is able to obtain a civil divorce and not a religious one, is not able to remarry under Jewish law. By extension, permission to remarry in Israel would not be granted by the Rabbinate. This situation, which is created by an issue in Jewish law, presents an extreme burden and difficulty for many women who are unable to legally remarry as their former spouses obstinately use this element of Jewish law against them. In order to partially remedy this situation, many aspects of family law have been moved to secular courts. These changes can been seen in “[a] 2006 Supreme Court ruling remove[d] issues of alimony, child custody, and inheritance from the religious courts” (Fox, 2008, p. 242). Therefore, in a case when religious and secular partners deal with issues of family law, there will not be any unfair considerations based on religious elements.

Another aspect of the religious influence that the Rabbinate has on the personal sphere is that of abortion. Abortion in Israel is legal when the criteria are met that it is necessary to save a life for the physical health of the woman or for issues of mental health, in addition to numerous scenarios such as rape, incest, fetal impairment, and other considerations (Fox, 2008, p.242). There is also the ability to navigate the system bureaucratically to obtain an abortion (Portugese, 1998, pp. 148–149), but generally, “it is not allowed for economic or social reasons and is not available on request” (Fox, 2008, p.242). In order to obtain permission for an abortion, approval has to be granted by a committee of two physicians and a social worker who are appointed by the Ministry of Health or the hospital where one seeks an abortion. Generally, this is not a contentious issue, and abortion is generally non-problematic. Obtaining consent from the committee is

generally a straightforward process, and there is not any undue influence in the way in which approvals for abortions are granted. However, the abortion committees currently do not take elements of Halacha into account when making considerations and may allow an abortion that runs counter to Jewish law.

The Rabbinate has asked repeatedly and pressured the government to be allowed to appoint rabbinic authorities to abortion panels to provide a Jewish religious perspective. However, there is a great deal of fear among secular Israelis that this will be another nexus of control and power the ultra-Orthodox community will seek to exercise on secular society, and this request has been rebuffed numerous times. Nevertheless, medical committees for abortion are still a contentious issue and the fault line in the relations between secular and ultra-Orthodox Israelis (See Francoeur & Noonan, 2003, p. 602).

While there are many elements of religious influence in the state of Israel, certain points of state and religious contention are often part of an ongoing compromise that seeks to establish shifting boundaries between the public and the private spheres. One example, which the ultra-Orthodox authorities, through the Rabbinate, have attempted and failed to legislate, is that of Sabbath observance. In Judaism, Saturday is the Sabbath and the day of rest. Yet in Israel, Saturday, being the only weekend day, has gradually turned into a capitalist society style vacation day, as seen among other developed and relatively affluent nations. This means an increase in "hedonistic" values, which have then become open to cultural influences and are reconnected to new cycles of consumption. Even though there has been a ban on commercial activity on the Sabbath in the past, a recent survey estimates an average of 600,000 people participate in commercial and leisure activities on the Sabbath throughout Israel. This change can be understood by the fact that "in earlier years…commercial activity on Saturday was restricted; since the early '90s shopping centers located outside city centers cater to the desires of a growing secular public" (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, p. 76). There is a distinct duality to this situation where secularism is on the rise, yet public ordinances and laws based on religious sensibilities are on the increase.

Although this technically violates aspects of the ultra-Orthodox hegemony over the place of religion in the private sphere, the border of this issue has been shifted more closely into the public sphere. "Changes in leisure and recreation patterns have clearly undercut traditional religious practices, and the growth of Sabbath entertainment reflects this" (Dowty,

2001, p. 173). This is recognized by both secular society and the ultra-Orthodox as an issue on which there can be compromise outside of the exclusionary zones of ultra-Orthodox neighbourhoods

The Question of Who Is a Jew? Questions of Jewish identity

As a Jewish state, Israel needs to make a key determination of who is Jewish in order to determine what criteria are necessary for one to claim Jewishness. Being Jewish in Israel extends beyond merely religious identity and is a key element to other facets of national life such as a determining factor in one's ability to immigrate to Israel. As Judaism has been and is interpreted to be a large number of elements from an organized religion to a culture and social group, it is important that there be a clear definition of what it means to be Jewish in the context of the state. Key to this issue is

> the question of recognizing non-Orthodox converts as Jews in immigration policy and legal status [which is] … critical to non-Orthodox religious groups in Israel and elsewhere and [has] acquired wide practical significance with the high number of mixed marriages among immigrants from the former Soviet Union. (Dowty, 2001, pp. 171–72)

In this matter, where the public and private sphere overlap, there is the contentious ultra-Orthodox position that claims authority over fundamental elements of practiced Judaism such as conversion by trying to shape the religious practice and policy of what it means to be Jewish. The fundamental defining element of Jewishness becomes both an inclusive and exclusive process in which the ultra-Orthodox definition and religious stringencies regarding Judaism through matrilineal decent take precedence over other interpretations of determining who has Jewish status. In essence, this means that a religious minority controls the core definition regarding the religious character of the majority. For Israeli citizens, this can have wide-reaching implications on personal status issues, such as marriage, burial, etc.; Jews living in the Diaspora must meet the ultra-Orthodox criteria in order to be eligible for citizenship in Israel on the basis of their religious affiliation.

Jewish identity is a critical element of national unity and is an important element in the cohesive nature of the national structure. There are many justifications the ultra-Orthodox community uses to carefully police, monitor, and determine criteria for Jewish status. Among these fears is the breakdown of society. In the ultra-Orthodox view, that would occur, from a

religious perspective, with biblically prohibited illegitimate unions. The claim, since the foundation of the state in 1948, is that civil marriage, which is sanctioned through the courts or which takes place outside the country, would allow citizens to bypass biblical injunctions against, for example, members of the priestly caste marrying a divorcée or other such prohibited unions.

> Problematic cases from the perspective of Jewish law, such as when one of the partners is non-Jewish or doubtfully Jewish, or when a *cohen* and a divorced woman wish to be married, have been settled in practice by the expansion of legally recognized non-marriage forms of cohabitation, such as common-law marriages, and by civil marriages conducted in other countries. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 142)

This work-around solution creates intrinsic issues for the Orthodox Rabbinate and presents a severe challenge to the status quo and the authority of the Rabbinate.

In reality, this well-established loophole that citizens are able to be married and have those marriages recognized by the Interior Ministry and not through the Rabbinate represents a shift in the Rabbinate's ability to regulate and control its religious domination over the private sphere. Nevertheless, citizens remaining in Israel who wish to be married inside the country must obtain permission for a marriage license through the Rabbinate to ensure that the proposed union is legitimate. Intermarriage between religious groups, for example, between ultra-Orthodox and secular groups, is not very prevalent, and, therefore, creates an added level of difficultly for secular Israelis who seek to be married under the auspices of the Rabbinate. In order to prove one's Jewishness at times can be the equivalent of proving a negative where there is no formalized proof that one has a particular religious affiliation beyond what the records of the Interior Ministry have listed for the individual's religious affiliation at birth. In a nutshell, this is the dilemma faced by many secular Israelis who have difficulty getting through the Rabbinate even though they are completely Jewish.

There are many reasons that can be attributed to the overall decline of marriage in the state of Israel between 1948 and 1995. In comparison to other developed countries, Israel experienced a 46% decline in registered marriages versus 27% elsewhere (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 142). However, as the statistics only refer to officially registered marriages in Israel and not citizens who are married in other jurisdictions and seek recognition through the Interior Ministry, there may be a large disparity in the number of people seeking recognition

of their marriages and the number of marriage licenses granted for religious and other reasons. Issues such as these are fundamental to questions of religious identity. Therefore, determining which religious standard should be used to determine who is Jewish, and, by extension, what government policy will reflect, are among the most contentious and fundamental issues facing the state of Israel today. This continues to be the case as "since the mid-1990s the establishment of civil family courts has eroded the role played by rabbinical courts in family matters other than the performance of [the actual] marriage and divorce" (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 142) and, as a result, weakens the authority of the Rabbinate.

A telling example of this situation of key identity recognition is at play in two aspects. In the first, the ultra-Orthodox community has sought for many years to change the Law of Return, particularly to increase the stringency of conversions to be equivalent with ultra-Orthodox standards and, therefore, confine immigration of Jews to Israel who meet ultra-Orthodox standards. But Shafir and Peled explain why this religious stringency does not work:

> This…definition is too restrictive, however, in view of the demographic aim of Zionism, to maintain and increase the Jewish majority in Israel. As a result, the Law of Return was amended, in 1970, so that only one Jewish grandparent is now required in order to entitle a person and her/his spouse and minor children to the privileges provided by the law. Thus it is estimated that up to 25% of immigrants from the former Soviet Union are not Jews by Orthodox definition...[A]s marriage, divorce, and burials are all under the exclusive jurisdiction of religious authorities (whether Jewish or non-Jewish), these non-and-doubtful Jews run into problems when they come to need these services, unless they first convert to Judaism. (2002, p. 145)

Nevertheless, "the Orthodox parties are still struggling to restrict the definition of a Jew in the Law of Return…by having the law read, following the word 'converted,' 'in accordance with the *Halacha*' (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 145). In a sense,

> the definition [as it now stands] covers people who may have converted to Judaism according to non-Orthodox procedures. In 1989, an attempt to institute this change was narrowly defeated in the Knesset, after the Reform and Conservative Jewish establishments in the US threatened to cut their contributions to Israel. In this case, then, when Orthodox political

> power came to be up against the basic Zionist interest, it could not prevail. (Shafir and Peled, 2002, p. 146)

Attempts to retake control over the core definition of Jewish identity from the Rabbinate, and by extension, the ultra-Orthodox minority, have generally not been very successful in the past.

Despite past unsuccessful attempts to change the Law of Return, the oversight of immigration to Israel is controlled by the Interior Ministry that uses a very different criterion, not one based on Halacha and ultra-Orthodox religious rulings. As this area is also critical to the ability of a Zionist state to attract Jews from the Diaspora, although status issues, such as conversion and marriage in Israel, are under the purview of the Rabbinate, immigration is not.

The second major nexus of contention in the debate over Jewish identity is the establishment—as noted elsewhere—of family and civil court, and the expansion of civil court into various matters that had previously been under the jurisdiction of the religious court. With the consolidation of power through the secular court over issues of Jewish identity, for example, questions about religious and secular procedures for divorce, decisions that are not based on Jewish law and can, therefore, potentially be more equitable and egalitarian, seek to advance legal protections and liberal values for secular and religious Jews alike. While this may contrast with various elements of the Rabbinate's control over religious policy, a religious divorce and civil divorce still work hand in hand, though from a different viewpoint, not necessarily from the perspective of religion.

The idea of having Jewish elements integral to Zionism has always been present in the development of secular policies of statehood. This is apparent from the Second Zionist Congress in 1898 when issues of Jewish religion were discussed in the context of a modern planned secular state, as well as in the 1935 Congress where there was an attempt to theoretically examine the elements of Judaism that have a historical basis such as Sabbath observance and dietary laws in the public sphere in the context of the formation of a modern Jewish state.

> The arrangements discussed in the status quo letter (of Ben-Gurion) had deep roots in Zionist practice.…The educational autonomy of the Zionist religious movement inside the bounds of the yishuv...dated back to 1920. In 1898 the Second Zionist

> Congress resolved that “Zionism will not act in any way to infringe upon the Jewish religion.” In the Nineteenth Congress, in 1935... [it was stated that] “no public desecration of the Sabbath was to occur, and dietary laws were to be maintained in public institutions”. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 149)

In contemporary Israel, there has been a continual push against adopting the separation of church and state by various interested parties. One of the key issues for liberal Israelis is the dilemma of how to address the issues, conflicts, and various concerns of individual rights and their commitment to the ethno-national definition of state. This is discussed in more detail in its religious context in the section on “Who Is a Jew” that examines the criteria and religious considerations involved in the very fundamentals of Jewish identity in the Israeli content. Yet in the sense of liberal democracy, the question is broader as state and religion, generally, and issues of religious identity, more specifically, create a contentious borderline between religious and secular poles of society and the fundamental question of what it means to be Jewish in the Jewish state, and, indeed, what it means to be Jewish generally. These issues are important to address from both the secular and religious elements of society as they are critical components to maintaining the status quo.

The status quo arrangement is based on a strategy of a dual approach by liberal secular Israelis: gradually eroding the religious status quo through legislation and judicial action and finding practical ways of circumventing religious constraints on individual rights. This concept reaffirms the general movement towards increased secularism in Israeli society and increased contraction and Orthodoxy among the ultra-Orthodox community who seek to claim and entrench its version of religiosity outside the public sphere. In this way, religious policies do not necessarily on a day-to-day basis impact the nonreligious in terms of daily life. Yet, at the same time, the impact and influence of the ultra-Orthodox community on the private sphere as well as in politics mean that there is a great deal of involvement in secular society but at a distance.

One of the key reasons Israel has had a difficult time in separating religion and state is that doing so would create a decisive resolution of the various issues at hand. The status quo arrangement relies on a fundamental imbalance that constantly needs to be addressed or displaced through ongoing compromise in order not to lend the appearance of one side taking

advantage of the other. Yet, even though there is seemingly an equilibrium between the secular and religious elements of society and that Israel positions itself as being a liberal secular democracy, the state itself still renders secular policies and institutions in a concerted and decisive manner. This creates an inherent conflict since many elements of the government, for example, at the political level as well as in the bureaucracy, are generally secular. This reflects the overall diversity of the country as well as the development of secularism in Israel. This is endorsed by Israeli secularists who see these institutions as a mechanism through which the religious elements in Israeli society will have less persistence in public life and allow for the withdrawal of ultra-Orthodox daily life from secular society.

One of the difficulties in examining the way in which the status quo is formed by secular government institutions and the religious community attempting to maintain a balance is the concept that the status quo constantly needs reinvigoration and new conflicts in order to perpetuate itself and to be understood as constantly striving to maintain a balance on religious issues. This comes down to the very nature of adopting elusive formulas in order to maintain the status quo, which necessarily divides the secular and religious balance within the state. This balance would not be sustained if it were not for constant participation in the process and without sufficient resources from all parties that preserve the status quo; a potentially ruinous situation would erupt and completely throw the equilibrium of state and religious issues into chaos. It is in this way that both sides are entrenched in their positions utilizing the status quo and striving for an arrangement that does not necessarily benefit either side with a clear victory, yet maintains a system in which incremental victories are able to be achieved.

Through compromise on fundamental issues, religious and secular elements of society are able to prioritize the issues that are of critical importance to them and use these issues as the bouncing principles for the status quo. Although issues are open for negotiation, the ultra-Orthodox community ensures that its concrete positions on which it is not willing to compromise are not up for negotiation. For example, this would include the issues regarding yeshiva students and military service in which the ultra-Orthodox compromise on the status quo in a way that suits them.

> Each subsequent change creates a new status quo that serves as a current starting point for further negotiations. In some issues…the Orthodox community has succeeded in pushing the

> line of the status quo in directions favorable to its interest. In other areas…the nonreligious communities have enjoyed the upper hand. What is important for our purposes is that there has scarcely been a deal cut, a compromise broached, or a coalitional agreement signed in a religio-political matter that did not appeal to the status quo as a relevant, regulative principle. (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 19)

The religious-secular conflict in Israel is complex and at times irrational because it involves an emotional ideological value on basic principles that characterize the essence of a Jewish state. The conflicts and issues that the ultra-Orthodox have waged protests over are numerous because these issues are key determinants to the form and function of the Jewish state. For the ultra-Orthodox community, Jewish values are at a higher level than simple political or socially distributed justice. Thus, a minority of the population feels that it should impose its religious views on the majority for its own good. This issue becomes complicated because it affects the entire Jewish community of the state, and often there are opposing views from both sides of the political spectrum. The state itself has a mechanism in which it manipulates and prevents the ultra-Orthodox positions from being considered in a dispassionate and businesslike way, and often the state will create circumstances for compromise, which do not necessarily undermine the high principles and ultimate values of the ultra-Orthodox communities and yet allow for ongoing compromise.

> The previous "status quo" was incompatible with the demographic, economic, and political changes. Officially, religious orthodoxy still holds the monopoly over significant aspects of life [for example, marriage]…and laws [that] protect the status of the Sabbath. In practice, however, alternative marital arrangements and commercial interests are rapidly secularizing the public sphere and rendering old arrangements irrelevant. (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 3)

The status quo agreement, which is an informal set of relations that have developed through time, deals with the fixed habits and demands of ongoing coexistence with formulas that do not fit either side's worldview or basic way of life. In this way, struggles and conflicts are not immediately dealt with but are often mitigated and dealt with in numerous ways. The agreement acts as a pressure valve to issues that otherwise would require compromising on principles or faith-based values and allows for both secular and religious society to negotiate the best possible arrangement without clearly creating a winner or a loser.

There are many reasons why the struggles of the religious/secular divide require a solution such as the status quo or one that can be perceived through the theory of consociationalism. This is because of fundamental demographic, economic, and political changes that have occurred in the country over time. This can also be attributed to the unique social situation in which the ultra-Orthodox in Israel now find themselves, which is an entirely new construct in the greater context of the Jewish Diaspora. This calls into question the relevancy of religion in the modern state as well as previously negotiated religious controls over various aspects of the public sphere.

The Orthodox minority controls a monopoly on marriage, which is put into policy through the Israeli Rabbinate, an element of the state. This is also the case with more public laws, such as laws dictating public Sabbath observance. And it is interesting to note that while there are various loopholes to create non-Orthodox marriage, such as recognition by the state of marriages performed abroad and marriages registered in other jurisdictions, it is still impossible to bypass religious laws dictating policies for marriage in the country. Yet this is not the case for Sabbath observance, which does have many loopholes and is for all practical purposes not observed among the secular majority in Israel regarding shopping, public attractions, and other businesses open on the Sabbath. This, therefore, calls into question the relevancy of status quo-type agreements, which although created for historical purposes to maintain control over the Jewish people, in keeping with biblical prohibitions against forbidden liaisons as discussed extensively elsewhere, for the majority of Israelis, it becomes an issue of identity and convenience to be recognized within a particular context in Israel.

There are also interesting jurisdictional issues that factor into this discussion. As the status quo and other religious legislation impact the personal sphere rather than the public, there is an effort to maintain the same type of pseudo-religious recollections and commonality presence in the early state period today. This includes the decision to require public institutions to maintain kosher observance, ostensibly maintain a series of Sabbath observance laws, and exempt ultra-Orthodox men and women from military service. While each of these aspects is further complicated and nuanced by the many aspects of negotiated compromise between secular and religious elements of society, part of this agreement is in exchange to create an establishment that works on issues of monopoly, marriage

arrangements, Jewish conversions, and burial. The ensuing picture is that the personal sphere is wholly dominated by laws that are applied to citizens individually, and public policy is often ignored and not nearly as strict as policies that are enforced through the Rabbinate versus other government bureaucracies. The key purpose of public observance of religious elements is to instil a religious commonality regardless of religious observance, yet personal sphere issues are geared towards the control of the individual at a much more personal level. The result is that there is no clear separation between church and state, and also, in a sense, regardless of the status quo, personal sphere issues are under the jurisdiction of the religious authority in individuals' personal lives.

Although status quo agreements do not resolve all the issues, flexibility exists to continually reopen the door of negotiations over these particular issues. Issues that cannot be solved through practical, ad hoc, negotiation on a communal level are passed to the realm of the secular and religious political and social elites. Because of the inherent conflict compromising would put social and political elites into, the issue is often not resolved at this level and is transferred to two local levels—municipal or judicial—or the issue is shelved entirely in order to avoid additional pressure on a particular dispute. It is interesting that this applies to, in the case of marriage, the prohibition of civil marriage, conducted under the aegis of all religions, whereas the Rabbinate performs only religious Jewish marriages and requires confirmation of the validity of a marriage performed in other jurisdictions in order to consider it to be a Jewish marriage. And this is the same for other major religions in Israel as well. Yet, even though the official recognition of a particular marriage must be done through the Rabbinate, various loopholes have been created in which a secularist or, for that matter, any citizen who refuses to be married by an Orthodox rabbi can either be married abroad or register a marriage from abroad and receive recognition of that marriage from the Ministry of the Interior, bypassing the Rabbinate entirely.

The status quo arrangement is generally somewhat flexible as the elements under debate are often involved in a give-and-take in which each side strives to achieve the best negotiated position for that particular issue, which may in turn require compromise on other issues, even those tied into deeply held religious convictions or beliefs (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 31). An example of this, as discussed previously, is local authorities who have loosened the various laws concerning commerce and entertainment on Sabbath and Jewish holidays

because of a tacit recognition of the secular majorities' demands for these venues. Issues concerning the Sabbath specifically are generally more localized as there needs to be little coercion to maintain policies against shopping on the Sabbath or Jewish holidays in religious neighbourhoods. However, due to the nature of these policies, which affect the public rather than private sphere among secular society, they are often not implemented or policed in the same way with the effect of creating many leniencies in the public sphere.

> The status quo was…based on the "freezing" of early agreements and understandings between religious and secular and new compromises of the same spirit. Thus, in the new state it was decided that *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws) would be observed in the public institutions, the Sabbath would be respected, ultra-Orthodox men and religious women were to be exempted from army service, and the religious establishment would have a monopoly over…marriage arrangements, conversion to Judaism, and burial. [Thus] all citizens, regardless of personal belief, are under the church jurisdiction in significant areas of their personal lives. (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 31)

The public sphere issues as they relate to the secular religious conflict are numerous and involve aspects of the nature of public space, the language used in Israel and its biblical origins, the symbols of the state, official holidays, and so on.

> The intensity of Israel's secular-religious conflict reflects the opposing visions these communities pursue in regard to the very nature of the Jewish state. What is at stake is a politics of Jewish identity, a struggle over ultimate values rather than distributory justice, over the whole rather than the parts. Inevitably, [these conflicts] assume all the ardor and intractability of struggles over high principles and ultimate values; in struggles such as this, constitutions are formidable obstacles to consociational "muddling through". (Cohen & Susser, 2000, pp. 20–21)

It is, therefore, an interesting counterpoint between the rights of individuals and their obligations and the collective rights awarded to a minority that can have access to national decision-making political processes and the rights of the majority in both the personal and public spheres in the way in which policy impacts their everyday lives. Various elements of control and acceptance of the social contract are involved by interacting with the state in various ways. This is no more apparent than in the state's use of religious symbolism and elements to form what is termed a civil religion, which has a uniting character.

While Reform and Conservative rabbis, and lately the government of Israel, demand pluralism in conversion, Orthodox and Haredi rabbis adamantly insist that the authority to convert should remain exclusively in the hands of ultra-Orthodox rabbis. This causes a deep rift in Jewish identity and is a central example of the difficulties caused by recognizing one particular stream of Judaism over others in determining fundamental religious rights and membership. This issue is particularly contentious as an example of ultra-Orthodox control over policy; if a non-ultra-Orthodox definition of conversion that does not follow the strict dictates and interpretation of Halacha were adopted, the public face of religion in Israel—and perhaps by extension the ability to influence that policy through the Rabbinate—would be greatly diminished.

What is interesting regarding conversion is that converts to Judaism with non-Orthodox conversions performed outside Israel are recognized as being Jewish by the Interior Ministry and for all practical purposes are able to immigrate to Israel. Yet in Israel, they may not be considered Jewish by the Rabbinate and, therefore, not eligible for services such as marriage, divorce, and burial. This creates a difficult situation with Diaspora communities who, much like in Israel, are primarily non-Orthodox and, thus, feel illegitimate in the context of religious recognition in Israel. Even more so, as noted elsewhere, the leadership of these non-Orthodox religious groups are not recognized by the state due to Rabbinate policy and, therefore, conversions that they carry out in Israel are not recognized at all.

> The status quo arrangement that developed …was that conversions made abroad -- even if they were Reform and Conservative -- would be recognized by the Ministry of the Interior. By contrast, a conversion undergone in Israel would be recognized only if it were Orthodox.…This state of affairs was based, it should be emphasized, on precedent rather than on written law. Hence, the offensive of the Reform and Conservative movements zeroed in on this weak link. They applied to the Supreme Court to have their own Israeli conversions recognized in Israeli law. (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 123)

If at some point in the future, the government would recognize the authority of non-ultra-Orthodox groups, the paradigm for a fundamental element of religious identity established through conversion will radically shift the balance of power and the hold the ultra-Orthodox community has over religious legitimization through particular standards.

The community sphere

The communal sphere has many aspects of influence by the ultra-Orthodox community and a great deal of Jewish policy relating to the national experience in terms of public society. The Rabbinate has control and reach in communal religious standards through the religious councils and by providing rabbis who are certified and ordained through the Rabbinate to local communities. In this way, communities throughout Israel have rabbis coming from a single point and are generally heavily influenced by Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox viewpoints. The rabbis involved in this program of regional representation are funded through both national and municipal funds and controlled through the Rabbinate. It is interesting to note that the Druze community receives similar funding as well. There has been a trend within the government to become more flexible in terms of issues relating to religious policy, and this is reflected in the ability of organizations to apply for government funding to build and maintain holy sites since 2002. "A law allows for the establishment of Jewish religious councils in communities. Those councils are funded by national and municipal funds. Only the Druze receive similar funding" (Fox, 2008, p. 242). This means that religious institutions that are not recognized through the Rabbinate, therefore, are not provided funding.

Each chief rabbi is elected to a tenure position as a rabbinical elder/leader and, in essence, becomes a government functionary often with the equivalent of a cabinet level position relating to the implementation and policy of religion as applicable through Israeli law. Even though the chief rabbi position is normally not held by a member of the ultra-Orthodox community, much of the bureaucracy is made up of ultra-Orthodox Jews. Although the leadership tends to be outside government influence, there are occasional high level ultra-Orthodox rabbis who become rabbis of various cities, though not the chief rabbi. This, therefore, means that the power of the chief rabbi in Israel is considerably weakened by external sources of authority, which the ultra-Orthodox community follows rather than the chief rabbi who represents a bureaucratic position rather than a position of religious or moral authority for the ultra-Orthodox community. The Rabbinate interacts with the community on a significant level as a state-funded body that controls life-cycle events and officially recognizes religious institutions in each locality. There can, therefore, be a degree of variance among the different branches of the Rabbinate though, generally, for the reasons mentioned

above, they tend to have a standardized level of understanding, such as their relationship with funding various non-Orthodox groups.

State-funded rabbis carry out the requirements of the Rabbinate when it comes to officiating at life-cycle events. Rabbis are required to be recognized by the Rabbinate, both from within the institution of the Rabbinate as in the case of regional rabbis, and other rabbis, such as the ultra-Orthodox, who may not be officially part of the Rabbinate, yet are certified as recognized and differ greatly from non-Orthodox rabbis. This is a critical issue as there is a great desire to have the power and authority of a recognized rabbi in order to become both part of the councils that pose a monopoly over life-cycle ceremonies and as a form of political patronage, which is reflected in the various positions which the Rabbinate takes. "The local religious council (a State-funded body)…controls life-cycle events and officially recognizes religious institutions in each locality" (Wagner, 2010, p. 48). These positions are expected to be carefully followed by the delegates of the Rabbinate on a bureaucratic level and on a wider level of religious standards. All rabbis who are approved by the Rabbinate, whether they strictly belong to the governmental bureaucracy or if they function outside it, are expected to maintain strict standards of religiosity and interpretation of various aspects of Jewish law. The daily functioning of government bureaucracy in the Rabbinate means that "under these circumstances, rabbinical councils that possess a monopoly over lifecycle ceremonies are largely creatures of political patronage, and control of these agencies is strictly a matter of political muscle" (Wagner, 2010, p. 49). This is often at odds with the majority of secular Israeli society.

It is this critical issue that determines the Rabbinate's stance on various matters and whether Jewish law can be interpreted with stringency or with leniency. In many instances, pressure from the ultra-Orthodox, both within and outside the Rabbinate, has increased the overall level of Orthodox standards set by the Rabbinate for all recognized rabbinical authorities. Therefore, there has been an ongoing trend to shift towards ultra-Orthodoxy even by non-ultra-Orthodox rabbis in the Rabbinate, such as Religious Zionists. The net effect of this increased ultra-Orthodox policy means that the Rabbinate is required to stipulate policies that are more at odds with the secular majority, which in many cases seeks policies of leniency while still working within the framework of the Rabbinate, and increased numbers of non-Orthodox Israelis seek alternative means outside the framework of the Rabbinate.

On a communal basis, this is particularly difficult. Many of the positions the Rabbinate adopts, whether as matters of interpretation of Jewish law or matters of policy, are widening the rift between secularism and the demands of the government to find compromise on religious matters for the benefit of the largest segment of the population. Any form of compromise is not being met by the hard line position of the Rabbinate and various elements that seek to increase the Orthodoxy and religiosity as maintained in Jewish law and government policy. In order to ensure that a "true" Judaism is preserved through adherence of ultra-Orthodoxy as well as through government controls over the personal sphere in the secular population, the line separating the personal sphere and the private sphere, as discussed in this chapter, often shifts to accommodate various positions in the overarching hegemony of the Rabbinate and ultra-Orthodox population within the private sphere. Conversely, many issues have been drawn into the public sphere, and, therefore, the effects of regulation have lessened during time. Despite these shifting borderlines that exist between the community and the individual, there are distinctly entrenched areas of religious policy that differentiate the two primary spheres of religious policy and its application.

The state sphere and the status quo

Before the enablement of the status quo agreement, there were many conflicts between the dominant secular and minority religious groups, which occurred frequently during the early Zionist period. This particular issue was recognized as a real threat to political and social cohesion and potentially threatened internal breakup within a Zionist state. During both the prestate and the early state period, the issue was negated through a series of consultations and trade-offs with various stakeholders on religious issues. This, therefore, led to a perpetuation of compromise in order to ensure stability underlying the Zionist Project, which sought to unite religion and secularism under the umbrella of secular Zionism. Collectively, these issues that were negotiated through pragmatic agreements and consensus building during the early stages of the Israeli state are what are known as the "status quo arrangement".

The status quo arrangement as a social solution is integral to the compromise and ongoing balance among the various Jewish groups in Israel. More generally, it also can be perceived in both the inter- and intra-relational agreements among adherents of various

religions and religious groups in Israel, and this ongoing policy extends beyond religion and politics. There are many aspects of the status quo policy, which is an unofficial rebalancing of various state and religious priorities in order to avoid confrontation and maintain a homeostatic balance among the various parties. From issues regarding marital status to commerce on the Sabbath and other religiously inspired laws, a principle of mutual veto addresses many fundamental issues by creating and reinforcing ongoing stability, although at times it is uneven. In this context, even if individual issues are not settled to the favour of one group or another, both sides can partake in the balancing process and thereby feel that they are stakeholders in the process. "Controversial issues in the area of religion and state…have been resolved on the basis of the mutual veto principle, known in Israel as the 'status quo solution'" (Don-Yehiya, 1999, p. 89). This necessarily creates a system of mutual determination where in this context ultra-Orthodox Jews control many aspects of religion in the private sphere and many aspects of Judaism relating to citizenship.

The status quo arrangement was originally formulated in a letter from the prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, to the Orthodox political party Agudat Yisrael on June 19, 1947 (Dowty, 2001, p. 166). This letter outlined what is, in effect, the framework regarding the status quo arrangement between religious interests and secular interests in the future state of Israel. In essence, it became the basis of a complex bargaining process of how the status quo arrangement, informal as it was, would give leverage to both sides of the equation and provide a theoretical counterbalance on most divisive issues (Korn, 2005, p. 23). The status quo arrangement serves as a reference guide for bargaining and recognizing various aspects of religiosity in Israeli society, such as Jewish Sabbath observance. Other examples of status quo negotiations include state funding of religious public schools and the compromise of leaving jurisdiction over marriage and divorce in the hands of religious state-funded authorities. However, there are some anomalies in the practical application of the status quo, especially regarding issues of public religion, such as banning transportation on the Sabbath as a whole (Dowty, 2001, p. 166).

> Additional problems arise from judging the outcomes of individual confrontations. Is it a success if one side gets a law enacted, but the measure is seldom enforced or is implemented in ways which are criticized by those who support its enactment? And how does one assess a situation where the same problem (for instance, controversy over public modesty, Sabbath observance, or the availability of non-kosher food) arises again and again, but each time with

> slight variations and the nature of the demands and subtle differences in the way the issue is resolved. But what if a particular controversy simply disappears from the public agenda without a resolution? In some circumstances the most persuasive conclusion is that neither side has one. Religious activists have scored some victories, but so have secular Israelis. It is difficult to weigh the closure of a road against the opening of a restaurant, discotheques, and cinemas on the Sabbath. The score is a tie, more or less. (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 162)

The ultra-Orthodox community controls the non-Orthodox segment of the population's freedoms in areas of family, dietary laws, and Sabbath Day observance; generally, the ultra-Orthodox position symbolizes the ethno-principle of the Jewish historical claim to Eretz Yisrael. The status quo relationship essentially means that the ongoing cycle of withdrawal and exclusion from mainstream secular society is tempered by the ultra-Orthodox community's ability to enforce its interpretation of religious dictates upon the secular majority. In this way, the ultra-Orthodox community has a great degree of inclusion in public discourse regarding civil legislative and policy issues relating to the personal sphere, for example, the regulation of marriage, conversion, and burial.

> Orthodox Jews ... have not only been awarded the full range of citizenship rights...but have also been given control of other people's rights, as in the areas of family and dietary laws and in regard to the observance of the Sabbath in the public sphere. The privileged status according to Orthodox Jews...has resulted from their symbolizing the ethno-national principle of Jewish historical continuity and Jewish claim to *Eretz Yisrael*. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 137)

As these are issues that are caught up with and relate to the essential character of Israel as a Jewish state, the position of the ultra-Orthodox community has for these and other reasons, such as political power, a great deal of influence in secular society even though there is an ongoing process of self-exclusion and other forms of exclusion by the mainstream population.

When Ben-Gurion created the status quo agreement, he guaranteed to ultra-Orthodox rabbis that they would be an integral element to the functioning of the state. "Ben-Gurion was sympathetic to those survivors of the Holocaust and was confident that secular Zionism had already triumphed. He was willing to let these remnants of the Diaspora Jews have their

way until they died a natural death in the new State" (Beck, 2010, p. 23). This was viewed as a compromise to Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews who sought to increase the religious aspect of the state and have their version of Judaism recognized. In order to give recognition to Holocaust survivors, these elements of Jewish religious practice allowed a degree of religiosity into the secular Jewish state that was being created.

The thinking of Ben-Gurion was to incorporate these elements of religious practice, which had all but vanished in the Holocaust, in the newly established state of Israel and allow ultra-Orthodox Israelis and ultra-Orthodox Jews in the Diaspora to be able to comfortably practice the elements of Judaism they considered to be of paramount importance. Ben-Gurion believed that these elements would inevitably die out because of the decline of religion post-Holocaust and leave only a secular Jewish state behind. Obviously, this was not the case, and the ultra-Orthodox segment of the population has increased to epic proportions. This has created new stresses and frequent disagreements on the various issues that comprise the status quo balance among the varying levels of the religious and nonreligious population in Israel.

The status quo is challenged in a number of different ways. Ben-Porat identifies four divisive issues in contemporary Israeli life that challenge the religious status quo and have increased in their contentious nature since the founding of the state of Israel (2008, p. 30). These borderline issues are critical to understanding the flexibility of the status quo and the underlying negotiations it entails.

The first issue relates to the "rise of an ideologically liberal secularism" that focuses on a Western style separation of church and state and the protection and creation of civil rights (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 33). Many secular Israelis wish for Israel to move closer to these values and to cease the institutionalization and governmental claim over the private sphere and religious policy. With a typical secular democratic separation of church and state, Israel would be able to focus on other issues. This comes out of increased dissatisfaction with the Rabbinate and the way in which religion is enmeshed with government, laws, and bureaucratic policy. This is significant because the Rabbinate, through the co-joining of state and religious policy, has been placed in charge of all matters relating to the personal sphere such as marriage, divorce, and the fundamental question of who is Jewish. "There is a broad consensus that Israel should be a 'Jewish state,' but deep controversy exists over the meaning

of the term, from a secular perception of a Jewish culture and a nation to an Orthodox version of a theocracy" (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 30).

A recent survey from the Smith Institute for the Hiddush Foundation for Freedom of Religious Equality published that 80% of the Israeli public is dissatisfied with the policies of religion and state, 86% expressed discontent towards the various policies, and 61% of non-ultra-Orthodox participants expressed that they would support a secular government without religious parties. Based on the data in this survey, the Israeli public is dissatisfied with the policies set by Haredi political parties, which include the future progress for secular society and the various rights controlled by religious groups in the private sphere (*The Jerusalem Post*, November 24, 2010).

> Uri Regev, the general director of Hiddush, an attorney and rabbi, maintained that "citizens want to establish a leading government instead of being submissive to religious policy set by a minority. To implement a declaration of freedom from religion and conscience it requires the state to remove Yeshiva stipends supporting a segment of the population to withdraw from society using government funding and to take away the monopoly of the Rabbinate over marriages, divorce, and the private sphere." Regev also emphasized that "the data represents the fact that the Israeli public is fed up with policy being set by the Haredi political parties and feels that their future and rights are being given up to the religious groups The public wants a leading government, not a submissive government. The public desires a government which will finally implement the promise of the Declaration of Independence relating to the freedom of religion and conscience. The public wants a government that will not pass yeshiva stipends and will take away the monopolistic control of marriage and divorce by the ever-more-Haredi rabbinate." Using the same metric, similar questions were asked of the Haredi population, 91% of whom said that they were dissatisfied with religious state policy, and 64% expressed discontent with the way in which religious policy is carried out by the state (*The Jerusalem Post*, November 24, 2010)

According to Ben-Porat, ***the second issue*** that challenges the status quo is the issue of Jews from the former Soviet Union, who often are Jewish enough to make aliyah and move to Israel under the auspices of the Jewish Agency, yet once in Israel, are not recognized as Jews by the Rabbinate. This affects over 300,000 immigrants, who immigrated in large numbers in the 1990s. Many immigrants did not see themselves as Jewish along the same rigid requirements as the Rabbinate in Israel (Wylen, 2000, p. 404). This is perceived to be a

major point of pressure to reaching an accommodation on issues of religious policies and not necessarily abiding by the strictest interpretation of Jewish law in determining one's Jewishness. This would be a major challenge to the Rabbinate, as through their strictly ultra-Orthodox interpretation, they limit the discourse of who is considered Jewish.

A directly applicable example is that conversion often does not have the same standards for the fundamental question of determining an individual's status and Jewishness as qualifications by other ministries. This issue, therefore, brings pressures on the Rabbinate and the government to find new forms of accommodation and ways to interpret existing religious policies regarding status and conversion in order to find a more lenient compromise. These issues have become a major challenge for the Rabbinate to interpret its standards on a strictly ultra-Orthodox basis with stringent criteria because this would limit the number of Israelis considered to be Jewish. As noted elsewhere, the government has tried to put in place various stop-gap measures that seek to further the government's goal of recognizing Jewish status among citizens who would not meet the criteria set by the Rabbinate because of religious stringencies. By trying to interpret and find leniencies, the government has sought to develop various loopholes through which people could claim Jewish status; however, since these programs are not widespread and are contentious, a great number of people still grapple with the central issue of recognized Jewish identity and status on both a personal and bureaucratic level. This dilemma involves the central issue that ultra-Orthodox religious interpretation of Jewish law as set forth by the Rabbinate has very narrow criteria, which do not match the life experience of the majority of secular or traditional Jewish Israelis.

The third issue in contemporary Israeli life that affects the status quo and religion is the advancement of Israeli society in the public sphere as it transforms into a consumer-driven society in which "commercial activity on the Sabbath is a striking example of the crumbling status quo and the growing insignificance of formal rules" (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 33). "The constraints of religious politics were demonstrated again in the '90s, when shopping centers on the outskirts of towns began operating on Saturdays and drawing large crowds" (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, p. 84). This is a rapidly evolving area of social change in Israel.

Increased consumerism in Israel has led to an increase in commercial businesses open during the Sabbath that cater to the large segment of the population that is not Sabbath

observant and wish to be able to shop on Saturday. For many reasons, such as Sunday being the start of the work week and the weekend, ostensibly only taking place half a day Friday and all day Saturday, prohibitions and regulations regarding the ability of businesses to be open on the Sabbath are mainly ignored in nonreligious areas (Shulevitz, 2011, p.45) This represents a particularly relevant example into the way in which the status quo has shifted in favour of secular Israelis, with large crowds utilizing Saturday as the day of increased commercial activity as opposed to religious areas where all commerce and motorized traffic comes to a standstill for the observance of the Sabbath.

The fourth issue that affects the status quo is the Working Hour and Rest Law. This law seeks to declare a day of rest and vacation in which employers are required to give their employees a day off. The Working Hour and Rest Law authorized the minister of labour to permit work on rest days:

> if he is convinced that ceasing work...is liable to inflict major damage on the economy, on an ongoing work project, or on the provision of a vital service to the public…The law was interpreted differently by religious groups and secular groups… [and] these differences were resolved by informal agreements and local arrangements between the Orthodox and secular communities or, at times, brought to the Israeli Supreme Court for adjudication. Overall…commercial activity was a relatively minor issue in religious-secular relations [in the early pre- and post-state periods]. (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, p. 81)

This particular law has different proponents in both religious and secular groups for reasons of worker equality and rights to the observance of the Sabbath. In these issues, the minister of labour has the authority to clarify issues and ensure that the day of rest, which is taken, does not inflict damage on the economy.

> Aspects of Jewish law are enforced upon the country's population based upon [the] “status-quo” agreement where the situation that existed at Israel's founding remains in force. A number of restrictions are enforced on the Jewish Sabbath and religious holidays. Most businesses must close and most busses and national airlines do not operate, and the streets in some ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods are closed to vehicles. (Fox, 2008, p. 242)

Through the ongoing use of the status quo, these issues are resolved on an informal or case-by-case basis instead of being generalized into larger issues that would affect the entire

country. Employers, therefore, need to apply to the Ministry of Labor if they are going to permit a workday on the Sabbath, and often these cases may be brought to the Supreme Court for adjudication and interpretation of the position of the law. Generally, the issue of commercial activity during holidays and on the Sabbath is relatively minor compared to other labour issues facing the court.

The status quo arrangements in this area have generally resolved many of these points of contention on a smaller scale, and the days of rest, which can be interpreted as a religious day of rest, are generally either on Sunday or Saturday. However, in the context of consumers and clients, business establishments struggle with catering to the needs of their consumers and the days in which they are interested in making purchases. As noted earlier, due to Israel's weekly schedule of Sunday being the first workday of the week and ending with Friday being a half workday, religious days of rest and worship are generally carried out by Muslims on Friday, Jews on Saturday, and Christians on Sunday, though this can vary to a great degree as secular members of all three major religions seek to maintain commercial activity during these days of rest in order to cater to the demands of their customers (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p.51). It is, therefore, apparent that consumer demands have created a new form of localized regulation in which some areas, which do not offend religious sensibilities, have stores that are open during a religious day of rest, and in other areas that do have religious members, stores remain closed. Thus, behavioural changes, which have happened in regard to Sabbath and the consumer, have changed into modes of commercialization and secularization.

Even though secularizing patterns have developed concerning the issue of shopping on the Sabbath, there are many contentious issues regarding budding neighbourhoods or even established neighbourhoods in which religious sensibilities are offended by having stores open on the Sabbath. In these contentious border areas or even in areas that have a more general character, ultra-Orthodox Jews have successfully used boycotts in order to preserve the status quo and seek to rebalance the secular demand for increased shopping on the Sabbath and the Orthodox requirement for all commercial trade to shut down on their day of worship.

An example of one such boycott is how the ultra-Orthodox community forced El Al airlines, which was formerly the state-owned national carrier, not to fly on the Sabbath. In

1992, the airline decided to concede to demands, and until privatization, the government generally did not operate the airline except in exceptional circumstances on the Sabbath because of the boycott. However, once the airline was privatized, it faced new consumer boycotts as it renewed operations on the Sabbath to certain locations but yet relied on the heavy traffic of ultra-Orthodox flyers (Dunbar, 2009, pp. 27–28; Mazie, 2006, p.163). After privatization, El Al started again to operate on the Sabbath, yet religious passengers still continued to fly on the airline. “Recently, the privatized El Al faced a consumer’s boycott because of claims that the airline had begun to operate on the Sabbath in certain locations. The solution to that crisis kept El Al grounded on the Sabbath, its seats crowded with religious passengers” (Kosmin & Keysar, 2009, p. 89). Generally, there is minimal violation of religious tenets regarding Sabbath observance, and the airline continues as before, seeking to minimize flights on the Sabbath, though this is not always possible.

> Religious parties' demand that the government enforce the law and shut down businesses that operate on the Sabbath led to some political controversies, but because limited budget is allocated to enforcement agencies, and many stores circumvent the laws by hiring non-Jewish workers, and finally because the revenue from operating on Saturdays is greater than the potential fines, the commercialization of the Sabbath continues unabated (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, pp. 82–83)

Still there is an economic reality: Due to the large number of secular Israelis, both Jewish and of other religions, and due to the fact that revenue is greater than the potential miniscule fines that business owners face for operating in contravention to the Working Hour and Rest Law, the commercialization of the Sabbath and the widening of commercial interests have expanded.

Ultra-Orthodox concerns about the religious character and fundamental nature of the state can take many forms. The considerations that the religious community has about violations of Jewish law in the public sphere, for example, compromising on stringencies regarding the Sabbath, are often a minimal compromise that entails greater stringency in ultra-Orthodox neighbourhoods, such as entirely banning the use of motor vehicles on the Sabbath compared to secular areas where no such prohibition exists. The same type of trade-offs can be seen in other areas such as commerce and kosher status where the ultra-Orthodox, seeking greater control over their immediate area, will arrive at a compromise on issues

involving the public sphere. This is not the case in the private sphere, as noted elsewhere, where religious elements control state policy. A particularly topical example of this can be seen in negotiations about allowing pornography to be displayed on cell phones and other wireless devices, or a lack of regulation as a bargaining chip for other issues (Deibert, 2008, p. 306). Ultimately, the government, which included religious political parties in its coalition, decided to allow the sale and subsequent taxation of pornographic material. Even though this issue runs counter to the ultra-Orthodox position, it was seen as an issue of concern with larger implications for practical compromises on other issues. Thus, even though on these issues the ultra-Orthodox community is amenable to change, there is a clear divide between religious and secular elements.

Israeli society wants both to preserve, and at the same time, try to enhance the way of life for citizens, which can take very different forms based on religious viewpoint. Another example of the status quo in the public sphere is the controversy regarding the use of bathing suit ads displayed in public bus stations. Other controversial advertisements include encouraging organ transplantation, promoting equal opportunity for women on local religious councils, establishing physicians' rights to conduct autopsies without the consent of family members, or investigating archaeological findings. In all these examples, advertising is seen as invading the public sphere insofar as an opinion that is not ultra-Orthodox is being put into the public realm. At the same time, backlash against any of the advertisements or a larger response towards the origination of these advertisements is put into place by the ultra-Orthodox community, and this can take many different forms. From localized protests to wider societal boycotts, pushing the line separating religion and secularism in the public sphere has become a contentious issue, particularly on the borderlines.

For religious status quo issues, a clear linkage has developed between religious and secular concepts as well as an ideological cleavage on the form and shape the public sphere should take. For the ultra-Orthodox community, many issues have become politicized religious issues and, therefore, have gained national attention and entered into the realm of issues that can be potentially negotiated with secular society. Other such issues, however, have not been given the same level of national attention and are relegated through the use of the status quo agreement to a lesser status. The status quo agreement is commonly used in preserving religious and secular leaders' positions and building an equilibrium that, while at

times is unsustainable and often untenable, supports the constant shifting of positions among various levels of authority in order to ensure continuity in ongoing non-resolution. The policy of the status quo arrangement was implemented in the pre-state era, and its purpose is and was to neutralize political issues and controversies and, most of all, to avoid any decision that would create conflicts (Don-Yehiya, 1999, p. 89).

> Some of the practices that are preserved by the status quo principle were introduced in the pre-State era. A prime example is the authority of the religious courts in Israel in matters of personal status, which is based on the legal system introduced in Palestine by the Ottoman rulers and subsequently adopted by the British Mandatory government. In many cases, the status quo principle is used to preserve political accommodations reaching negotiations between religious and secular leaders. (Don-Yehiya, 1999, p. 89)

One of the critical reasons for the introduction of the status quo principle in the pre-state era was that it allowed the preservation and accommodation of political factors, and for both religious and secular movements, it allowed—and still allows—negotiation on various levels. In effect, the creation of a separation between the personal sphere and the public sphere allowed ongoing political negotiation on a communal level that did not directly impact or infringe on the rights or abilities of individual citizens to, for example, worship in their various religions. This also means that social reform can be implemented, and various ideas regarding the population can be discussed outside the realm of religious policy. This, therefore, allows for accommodation and balance even if no real solution to the problems under discussion is ever reached.

It is important to understand that the status quo agreements and principles do not prevent conflicts regarding religious issues. It is apparent that the interpretation of the status quo, which is an informal arrangement among various members of society much like an implicit contract of citizenship, is an open venue to confrontation among rival parties regarding religion and state. It is also important to understand that both sides in the religious and secular political camps seek accommodation rather than outright victory in order to perpetuate the status quo and gain the acquiescence of their political opposites. In this way, particularly in the factional makeup of Israeli political power that constantly relies on a coalition government in order to rule, various ideological issues can be dealt with outside the political sphere, allowing each side to support minute victories for their disparate causes.

> In many disputes between religious and secular political groups, both sides claim to be defending the status quo and argue that the other side is trying to violate it....Nevertheless, the status quo principle is usually effective at dealing with confrontations over issues of religion and state. It helps mitigate the conflicts and make it easier for the disputants to negotiate and reach an agreement. (Don-Yehiya, 1999, p. 89)

As the agreement is informal and in practice is both undocumented and constantly in flux, the arrangements that either side reaches are constantly reinterpreted and renegotiated based on new fault lines in the ongoing contention between religiosity and secularism in the Israeli context.

Another key aspect of the status quo arrangement is that issues about which proponents can be extremely passionate and, indeed, feel that violations of these policies directly relate to their religious freedom or/and civil liberties is that the various complaints do not acquire public legitimacy and, therefore, become a validation or a root cause of new legislation declaring victory for either camp. Thus, as a whole, the status quo system must be both flexible and dynamic in order to be able to adapt itself publicly to new circumstances and conditions. This is often done by moving issues through various levels of government, relegating issues that could potentially become of national importance to local matters to be dealt with by the bureaucracy or shifting contentious issues between potential arbiters such as the Supreme Court and the Knesset, thereby moving the issue back and forth because it is a "political hot potato" that often requires a clear decision rather than ongoing negotiation. On the whole, these issues are often resolved by symbolic victories on particular issues of contention, with equilibrium being regained over the overall picture as the trend towards secularism increases, while increasing levels of hegemony are found within the ultra-Orthodox community itself over its own affairs.

This indicates that both in the public sphere and in the private sphere, small issues are being negotiated in favour of secularism, and due to the ultra-Orthodox communities' fear of eroding assimilation, a counterpoint is the increasing contraction of the ultra-Orthodox community and increased regulation over their circumstances.

> The status quo principle does not prevent changes in the existing situation; it merely limits them, restrains them, and prevents them from attaining public legitimacy and official validation by means of legislation....It is essentially a flexible, dynamic system that adapts

> itself to new circumstances and conditions, but enables the parties involved to ignore *de facto* changes by withholding from them official recognition and public legitimacy. (Don-Yehiya, 1999, pp. 89–90)

Despite the changes of power that the status quo arrangement represents, religious parties in the Knesset largely prevented any substantial changes to existing laws particularly in areas of church and state relations. The ultra-Orthodox community feels that the current situation and the acquiescence of the majority of secular Israelis suit their needs at the moment. Existing arrangements have been channelled into two distinct types of initiatives.

The first is that the Supreme Court and the judiciary are committed to liberal values that challenge the existing church-state relations. Judicial decisions have, therefore, demanded that ultra-Orthodox men enter the military, that the import of non-kosher meat be allowed, and that the state recognize gay marriages. With all these issues happening through judicial process rather than through a political or a legislative one, public face and the appearance of ultra-Orthodox political gain are not lost as the implementations of judicial court decisions must be carried out by the government bureaucracy. Relegating an absolute decision by the courts to administrative and bureaucratic levels means that in a real sense, much of the key elements under discussion do not change.

For example, the court decision that recognized gay marriage was not challenged by the political parties in a major way as gay marriage falls outside the purview of the Rabbinate (Wintemute & Andenęs, 2001, pp. 391–411; see Simon and Brooks, 2009, pp. 105–107). Yet, there is still no secular alternative to the services offered by the Rabbinate (such as being married in a civil service). Therefore, although compromises were seemingly made, control over the private sphere and marriage for heterosexual couples was not affected in the slightest. This, therefore, represents another aspect of the balance maintained between a judicial decision setting clear policy and the administrative implementation. The actual process of marriage is carried out through the city government, and this creates a second tier and an entryway into the public sphere for marriage. The situation is fluid, and same sex marriages still have many challenges to overcome (see Merin, 2004; Kenji, 2012; Ho & Rolfe, 2011; Triger, 2012).

Second is the circumvention of legal, semi-legal, or illegal rules. This refers to secular Jews who refuse to be married by an Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox rabbi. They, therefore, travel abroad in order to be married outside the authority of the Israeli Rabbinate. They are then able to be married and patronize business establishments or commercial interests that operate on the Sabbath or are non-kosher, all of which may be issues with the Rabbinate in Israel (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, p. 83). In all these cases, secular society would seem to be circumventing the Rabbinate and their control over the personal sphere. However, compromises of this nature do not directly impact the Rabbinate, which still has absolute control over Jews living in Israel much as other religions do over their populations.

McDonald's in Israel

An excellent example of the fault line between the public sphere and the private sphere regarding religious policy and the response of the ultra-Orthodox community to new forms of opposition was the introduction of McDonald's. The McDonald's chain was first introduced in Israel in 1993 during the peace process. Within a very short time, the McDonald's franchise for the country opened 80 restaurant branches and determined through market research that some of them would be kosher in areas where there was a demand for religious dietary observance, but the stores generally were not kosher (Noel, 2009, p.61; Griswold, 2012, pp. 117–119). The public showdown, which ensued on the basis of many branches not being kosher and not being closed on the Sabbath, underlined a fundamental difference in ideology and was a test of wills for secular Israelis and the religious sector of society.

The status quo, in the situation regarding McDonald's, was on tenuous ground, and throughout the 1990s, more than 80 new restaurants continued to be opened throughout Israel. For both the kosher, as well as the Sabbath issues, McDonald's was interpreted as being an affront to religious Jews, and this resulted in a government showdown trying to enforce Sabbath commerce laws and essentially trying to enforce policy that was already in place but generally ignored. In 1997, this led then-Minister of Labor Eli Yishai of the Shas religious party to force McDonald's to close its branches on Saturdays. McDonald's, through its Israeli CEO, Omri Padan, explained that there was a need to operate on Saturday as well as a need to sell non-kosher foods as this is what consumers demanded, even though the

government had attempted to enforce the law regarding Sabbath openings. He equated the government challenge brought to McDonald's to a fundamental issue of freedom and civil rights and underlined the fact that he was willing to fight for what McDonald's viewed as a fundamental issue of ideology and a test of the limitations contained in the Sabbath laws. McDonald's restaurants that are kosher are required to adhere to Jewish dietary standards as well as being closed on the Sabbath. Although generally, the issue of Sabbath observance is distinct from that of kosher status, the Rabbinate will not grant kosher certification to a business that is open on the Sabbath even if it uses only kosher products.

The government attempted to force its hand through a public display of force by going against the trend of the status quo. In this case, small accommodations were sought in order to balance the issue and move it away from a contentious focal point between religious and nonreligious elements of Israeli society. Since McDonald's not only had opened more than 80 branches across Israel, but also was a popular and internationally recognized brand, this case created a high-stakes and high-profile target for the government to make an example and to show that Saturday commerce laws could be enforced and that the company could be required to ensure that a larger number of its stores were kosher. There were a series of trials, and during 2000, McDonald's paid about 80,000 shekels (about U.S. $20,000) in a fine for opening various branches on the Sabbath. To bolster its case, the company ran a public issue campaign against the Ministry of Labor warning that Israel will become a theocracy like Iran, but it failed to change the Sabbath opening laws the ministry used against it in court (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, p. 84).

The lessons of this scenario were many for the ultra-Orthodox community as it showed that it was able to bring pressure to bear on the majority and enforce a law that was being flaunted by the majority of society. In this particular case, instead of reaching a compromise, which would have ultimately led to more stores being closed on the Sabbath or more stores being kosher, the ultra-Orthodox community in essence won its day in court, yet failed to achieve real results. For McDonald's, paying a $20,000 fine was definitely worth the financial gain it would make through keeping branches open. These same branches remained open, and the law continued to be ignored to great economic gain (Kook, 2002, pp. 163–164).

This case is highly symbolic of the secular, global, religious, and local cleavages present in Israeli society. The lessons learned by the ultra-Orthodox community from the McDonald's incident were that religiosity and religious laws that had become unenforceable were not effective tools against the growing commercialization and secularization of Israeli society. Ultimately, the majority of citizens has the right to decide when stores will be open as long as those citizens patronize the various establishments. This situation is perhaps one of the focal points that foreshadowed ever-increasing public protests. The protests resulted from increasing frustration in the ultra-Orthodox community, even though officially there are many gains to be had through negotiations. The benefits in terms amending the status quo and various regulations in bureaucratic policy and laws were potentially great. Though this was not the case in this instance, it seems that, overall, gains are steadily being made by secular society.

With the changing nature of the public sphere and the ultra-Orthodox community concentrating in distinct neighbourhoods and withdrawing from mixed and secular neighbourhoods across the country, more immediate gains are made in terms of control over the immediate local environment. Nevertheless, on a national scale, much of the influence the religious population has on the public sphere is being eroded and transformed into greater controls in the private sphere through the authority of the Rabbinate. Although more McDonald's restaurants have become kosher, the majority are still open on the Sabbath and not kosher; this continues despite the symbolic fines the McDonald's franchisee in Israel pays when a complaint is made by the government.

Many issues, such as the availability of adult content on cell phones or various religious policies in the public sphere, are also viewed as a challenge to the traditional/religious way of Israeli life; yet, as they are not governed by the Rabbinate per se, these areas are amenable to change. They, therefore, place the religious and secular elements of Israeli society in conflict as each tries to preserve and enhance its way of life.

3. Civil religion

Civil religion in Israel is an interesting phenomenon. Whereas church and state are conjoined in Israel, many laws emerge supported by religious dictates. It is interesting to note that many of these laws, such as the prohibition of selling leavened bread on Passover, laws

governing the personal sphere, and many others, have a basis in religious law; yet they are not dictated by religious law as the particularities of the law are normally set by the majority of the Knesset, who tend not to be religious, as reflected in the demographics of the state of Israel. Nevertheless, many aspects of Jewish law, or Halacha, continue to influence the way in which civil laws are passed, creating a type of civil religion that applies to all outside the context of religious observance. For example, on the High Holy Days in Israel, especially on Yom Kippur, most secular Israelis choose not to drive, as they observe the holiday; yet, this is not enshrined in law as an act that is forbidden. Many laws, such as the requirement to serve kosher food in government facilities, are, in fact, enshrined in law, though the food is not necessarily up to the higher kosher standards of the ultra-Orthodox community. This creates a law acceptable to most in the population without being viewed as being coercive. In this way, a public observance can theoretically be enacted without extending past what the secular majority is able to internalize on the basis of a shared history, culture, and society. These societal norms are, therefore, meant to serve as a cultural and religious reminder of particular observances, yet not enforce observance of these rituals on an individual basis or formally police these requirements themselves.

> Clearly Israel is not among states committed to the maximum separation between religion and state...neither is the modern Jewish state a theocracy, governed by religious clerics or religious laws. Rather, Israel ranks somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, together with European states that have "established," state-supported religion but strong respect, at the same time, for religious freedom. (Dowty, 2001, p. 161)

In 1947, David Ben-Gurion, who at the time was the chairman of the Jewish Agency, sent the status quo letter to the Agudat Yisrael party in order to win their support. They had previously dropped out of the pre-state yishuv in 1925 because of disagreements on the future structure of the state in terms of the intersection between religion and state. The status quo letter, as written by Ben-Gurion, was, therefore, a compromising peace offering in order to bring back the Agudat Yisrael party. The arrangement outlines four major points, which can be understood at the same time as both reconciliatory and compromising from the perspective of the secular government that sought to form a more inclusive society. These four points include: First, that the Sabbath, which is designated as Saturday, will be a national day of rest; second, that keeping kosher will be observed in all government kitchens

and facilities, such as in the military and the court system and so on; third, religious courts will maintain exclusive jurisdiction over the personal sphere, including marriage and divorce and other related issues; and fourth, the status quo letter sought to preserve the autonomy of the religious educational system so that there would be limited interference from secular society in the way Orthodox Israelis educated their children and, by extension, shelter them from secular indoctrination. In the ensuing years of the state, all these points have been challenged and have adapted in many different respects with various additional elements added on or compromised, yet the underlying structure of the status quo arrangement remains the same till the present day.

The particular issues in the public sphere are very unevenly applied, unlike issues that affect the private sphere. The application of religious values and interpreted Jewish law in Israeli society can be considered another form of civil religion, which attempts to affirm greater religiosity and commonality in religion in Israel. Therefore, it follows that various traditional symbols of Jewish identity have become significant symbols in public life, though not necessarily in a Jewish context. This can be interpreted through the various symbols of the state, which have a correlation to ancient Jewish religious symbols. These symbols and other forms of civil religion do not indicate a higher level of religious observance, but they do indicate an increasing willingness for the appropriation and secularization of various religious elements to form a cohesive national identity that encompasses all aspects of society, both religious and secular (Dowty, 2001, p. 166; Yadgar, 2011, p. 36–44). Not only are these symbols visible in the public sphere, but using Jewish symbols has the effect of diluting their religious context and re-forming them into symbols of national unity and those of a civil religion. Collectively, the initial motives behind co-opting religious symbols as symbols of the secular Zionist state sought to create a unified civil society. The effect has become mixed, particularly with the advent and increase of Religious Zionism, which sees religious significance in some current forms of civil religious practice. While this is not the case for secular Israelis, religious public symbols play a major role in shaping their collective identity, though not necessarily in a religious sense.

It is interesting to note that the Rabbinate itself in a national survey found favour with only 12.6% of respondents who indicated that a ruling by the Rabbinate would take precedence over an active law issued by the Knesset (Dowty, 2001, p. 178). Therefore, it is

doubtful that various forms of civil religion or the implementation of religion through interpretations of Jewish law by the Rabbinate will pose a serious threat to democracy or greatly unbalance the status quo. “If this is the case, and if the general picture painted here is accurate, what if anything is a threat to the status quo?” (Dowty, 2001, p. 178). Much of the authority that the Rabbinate has in the public sphere is merely symbolic for the public, yet it can be difficult or impossible to overcome for individuals.

It is important to note that Orthodox influence has increased in two important areas that were not mentioned in the original status quo letter, yet have emerged through ongoing negotiation with secular society. First, as discussed extensively elsewhere, is that Orthodox women and Orthodox yeshiva students are exempted from mandatory military service. Second, there is an important debate in Orthodox society about the very basic concept of “Who Is a Jew?” in which it becomes increasingly important for the Orthodox to define a Jewish Israeli— the citizen and the person—within the context and boundaries by the terms dictated by the Rabbinate. The result is, therefore, that Orthodox Jews in various contexts are unashamedly getting a number of privileges to very significant aspects of Israeli society, which pertain to citizenship rights, duties, and the rights and duties of other Israelis (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 141). Finally, Jewish family law regarding marriage and divorce allows rabbinical courts to have exclusive jurisdiction over these matters in Israel. It is important to note that this follows from historical periods in the Ottoman Empire and British Mandatory Palestine even before the pre-state period (Raday, 1992). The jurisdiction of family law was officially recognized as being the providence of religious authorities in Palestine (Shafir & Peled, 2002, pp. 141–142). Therefore, the resulting law is officially that nonreligious civil marriage and interreligious marriages are not available in Israel with limited exceptions.

4. Religious basis for selected laws

Numerous laws in Israel have religious connotations or aspects. Some of these laws are made to preserve the status quo arrangement between the secular and ultra-Orthodox segments of society, while others act as a reflection of Israel’s roots as a Jewish state (Barak-Erez, 2007, pp.3–15). It is interesting to note that while many of these laws do not necessarily conform to Halacha, the interpretation of religious law, they do acknowledge the unique cultural and religious identity inherent in Jewish Israeli society. Examples of religious

bases include Passover laws, laws governing the personal sphere, work on the Sabbath, and the use of kosher-food regulations in government institutions, as well as numerous other issues.

In this section, the religious bases for a sampling of laws in Israel are discussed. These laws follow the borderline of religious intention and observance and a public secular interpretation, which acts as the cornerstone of a uniting civil religion in Israel. Therefore, the stringencies that the courts have applied to these various laws cannot be compared to the religious dictates and religious legalistic reasoning behind the various aspects of Jewish law. Jewish law itself has many different requirements. Nevertheless, these laws impact Israeli society since they preserve the status quo arrangement between the secular and ultra-Orthodox segments of society. In the final estimation, many of these laws are a reflection of Israel's roots as a Jewish state and are essential in formulating a civil, yet secular, society. In fact, since these laws do not necessarily conform to Halacha (Englard, 1987), they are often perceived by the ultra-Orthodox community as a double-edged sword. While the original intent of the laws is to preserve facets of Jewish religion in society, because they do not necessarily conform to Jewish law, they, therefore, threaten the unique culture and religious identity inherent to ultra-Orthodox Jews within the larger Israeli society. Among the examples discussed in this context are Passover laws, the various laws governing the personal sphere, laws prohibiting work in its various forms on the Sabbath, less than strictly kosher (according to ultra-Orthodox stringencies) food regulations in government institutions, and others (Lerner, 2009).

In one example, Sabbath observance, which has biblical roots, is interpreted in Rabbinic Judaism as the prohibition to work and do business on Saturday, the day of rest. However, by Orthodox interpretation of Rabbinic Judaism, this is extended to a variety of prohibitions, including travel and work on the Sabbath and the use of electricity. Because this particular element separates observant Jews from non-observant Jews and is one of the aspects of the status quo arrangement, it becomes the focal point of many secular–religious debates (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, p. 81). Sabbath observance is extensively kept to a certain degree. Nevertheless, as it relates to public sphere regulation, it is not evenly applied, and Sabbath is a day of leisure and shopping for the majority of secular Israelis in areas where they choose to engage in commerce and leisure. The government strictly prohibits

Jews from working on the Sabbath, and establishments are required to pay fines, when and if the law is enforced. The government in the past proposed to rectify the issue by identifying non-Jews who are allowed to work on Saturday by Jewish law, such as members of the Druze community. However, in reality, this is very unevenly applied, and Jews who do wish to work on the Sabbath in areas that support this type of economic activity are generally not barred from doing so.

> Every year, businesses pay fines if they are caught employing Jews in economic activities. A business open on Saturday is immune if they can prove, with the help of government identity cards, that its employees are non-Jews. Those handing out the tickets for Saturday work are drawn from members of the Druze minority. (Beit-Hallahmi, 2007, p. 160)

Another such law is that of kashrut, or kosher, which relates to Jewish dietary laws. These laws are institutionalized and well-defined in national institutions and have various third-party kosher certification agencies that employ a bureaucracy of inspectors and oversight to ensure that kosher is being kept in public establishments. This stems from the fact that Orthodox Jews will not eat in a non-kosher establishment; thus, having an inclusive policy towards kosher status in government establishments will not prohibit Orthodox citizens from participation in these offices, establishments, and institutions. However, this issue is slightly more complex as there are various levels of kosher certification, and often the kosher certification issued by the local Rabbinate certifying kosher status is not acceptable to more stringent ultra-Orthodox. The certificates are issued by kosher inspectors on behalf of the local municipality's Rabbinate office.

> The kashrut system, therefore, signals to religious people where to shop and eat and forces entrepreneurs to make a clear choice with respect to whom they are catering. Large numbers of Jewish Israelis keep kosher, including many of those who shop on the Sabbath, so the cost of being non-kosher is supposedly higher. (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, p. 89)

Thus, keeping a kosher establishment becomes an important factor in purely economic terms to ensure a city clientele even if that clientele is non-religious.

Demographic developments and Sabbath observance

One of the key reasons for the shift in perception and policy in the public sphere is demographic developments that have occurred during the past decades. With a projected demographic trend of steady increase in the ultra-Orthodox population (Elazar, 1991; Landau, 2003), there is no questioning that reformulation of the public sphere in areas that have become increasingly religious is taking place. This is due to the changing character of various neighbourhoods, primarily in the centre of Israel, especially in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, while many large mixed and secular neighbourhoods have increasing numbers of ultra-Orthodox Jews and a withdrawal of secular Jews from these areas. The changing nature of these communities, therefore, has a heavy influence on common spaces and the patterns of life in these areas. This relates to many different aspects, such as Sabbath observance, which has changing patterns in both mixed and entirely religious neighbourhoods in the aforementioned cities. There are

> extensive…disciplines associated with traditional observance of the Jewish Sabbath; they involve prayers, social meals, study, and refraining from any invasive manipulation of Earth's resources. Thus, among many other restrictions, no creation of fire, no writing, no farming, [no driving] and no business [are] permitted for 25 hours (Gopin, 2002, p. 235)

Moreover,

> demographic developments have also affected the emergence of changes in the religious status quo.…Thus, there are increased pressures to close roads to all kinds of traffic on the Sabbath and Jewish festivals. Most of the changes of this sort characterize cities of Jerusalem and Bnei Brak and the result of population fluctuations that have led to the “Haredization” of streets in residential areas. (Don-Yehiya, 1999, pp. 90–91)

In addition, there has also been heavy influence on particular areas of civil policy in the public sphere, especially that of advertisements. In many cases, advertisements seek to push the envelope in terms of making a statement or gaining attention for a particular product, and this often runs counter to ultra-Orthodox sensibilities and has been a point of contention, particularly in their neighbourhoods (Efron, 2003, p. 145).

> Despite protests from advertising agencies and complaints from non-religious Jews, the ultra-Orthodox continue to heavily influence advertising in public places. In 1990 the Knesset outlawed “excessive” exposure of human anatomy and sexually suggestive photographs in

> outdoor advertising media. Thus, fashion ads, in particular swimsuit ads, have retreated to the pages of magazines (*Christianity Today*, 1992, p. 77)

Even when advertising is not necessarily directly tied to immodesty and even at times when various advertisements appear outside strictly Orthodox neighbourhoods, it is still a focal point of social discord. The ultra-Orthodox believe that they are exposed to this material as they venture forth into the public sphere, for example, in the case of mixed neighbourhoods or secular neighbourhoods, which may contain employment, recreation, shopping destinations, et cetera. It is, therefore, apparent in the case of advertising that the boundary in the public sphere relating to the regulation of the public message, even within secular neighbourhoods, is constantly being shifted towards inclusion in private sphere politics and, thus, religious regulation. At the same time, a counter to this can be seen in secular cities, such as Tel Aviv, which have no qualms about various types of ads being displayed in public because of the largely secular character of the city. By staking out advertisements as a key indicator of religiosity or secularism, the net effect of these changes is that an established pattern begins to emerge about the way in which people regard various neighbourhoods and, by extension, may view the character and nature of the entire city. Therefore, the boundary line between the public sphere and the private sphere is often moved to encompass larger sections of the private sphere and apply religious morals and interpretation to them.

Passover Law

The laws regarding the observance of Passover are particularly interesting. According to Halacha, ownership of bread and all leavened products on the Passover holiday is absolutely forbidden. A form of spring cleaning is undertaken by religious individuals who rid their homes of bread or put away and sell, at least for the period of Passover, any leavened products, or derivatives thereof, they may own. Along these lines, a law was first established in 1956 to preserve this unique cultural aspect of Passover observance in Israel. The law forbids the sale of *chametz*, or leavened products, during the course of the Passover holiday (Mahler, 2004, p.71; Mazie, 2006, p. 44). This law has, for the most part, in the past, been observed at the municipal level; this means that in major cities such as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the majority of businesses do not sell leavened products, and if a store or restaurant

chose to do so, it would receive a municipal fine. The specific law, The Sale of Bread and the Festival of *Matzot* (Prohibition of Leaven) Law, 5746/1986, revised from its previous form, is better known by the paradoxical name the Chametz Law. Although it is a national law, it is enforced on a local level rather than a national one. As a result, many Arab and Christian areas do sell leavened products on Passover without repercussion. Many secular Israelis who choose to eat leavened products during Passover go to these locales in order to do so.

A very interesting recent case involving the sale of leavened products on Passover happened when a restaurant in downtown Jerusalem sold hamburgers with regular (leavened) buns on Passover (Zino, 2008). Although many non-kosher restaurants choose not to sell leavened products to make them attractive to the majority of Israelis who do not eat leavened products on Passover, this particular restaurant, which was itself not kosher, chose to sell hamburger buns with their hamburgers privately on their premises. As a result, the city inspector gave the restaurant a fine of 5,000 NIS (about $1,400 CAD in 2012 dollars) and reprimanded the restaurant for selling leavened products on Passover in violation of a municipal ordinance based on this national law. The restaurant fought this prohibition in court. It came before Tamar Bar Asher-Tzabann, a religious judge in municipal court, who ruled that the intention of the law was to remind Israelis of Passover, the observance of the holiday, and the rituals associated with it, and not necessarily to force all citizens to abide by the Orthodox interpretation of the holiday. In other words, this allowed an interpretation of the state's position in terms of religious rights, giving it the ability to enforce a particular law, which has to be in proportion with the rationale behind it. The judge ruled that as the sale of chametz took place in a private area, it was not considered public, a major criterion of the law, which stipulates *public* sale of leavened products. The case was, therefore, overturned, much to the consternation of the Haredi public, who sought to enforce a unified law applicable to the Jewish population of Israel to observe the religious dictates as they relate to the sale of chametz on Passover.

An amusing anecdote emerged in the aftermath of this case (Kay, 2009). During Passover, a young Haredi man entered a supermarket that sold leavened products; he was completely nude, except for a sock covering his private areas. Shortly afterwards, the individual, who had repeated this protest several times in past years, was arrested for public indecency. During his hearing, he asked the judge: How is it possible that if the store is able

to sell leavened products during Passover on the rationale that it is not a public location, but exposing oneself in the same location is considered public indecency? Obviously this claim was in jest, but it spoke to the heart of the matter: Are all areas, even if they do not contain a large concentration of religious individuals, susceptible to the ultra-Orthodox interpretation of religious dictates? A more involved perspective can be observed when it comes to the personal sphere, in which government policy, for the most part, is in line with the ultra-Orthodox interpretation of Halacha.

Personal sphere laws

The issues surrounding the personal sphere are of great contention in Israel. Officially, most government religious policy, especially that established by the Ministry of Religion, is dictated by the ultra-Orthodox minority in the country, which seeks to enforce a strict interpretation of Halacha in state affairs. As there is a co-mingling of religious policy with the state, as opposed to a separation of church and state, religious policy, in fact, is a very large factor in the everyday lives of many Israelis. For services such as institutional funding, marriage, burial, divorce, conversion, et cetera, the ultimate authority is the Rabbinate, which, as a branch of the government, sets policy and is run with an ultra-Orthodox agenda.

> Paradoxically, the vast majority of Jewish Israelis strongly agree that Israel is a Jewish state, but strongly disagree about what a Jewish state means. The source of this disagreement is largely the role of religion in public life. Previous arrangements known as the "status quo" that manage the differences are being eroded by demographic, economic, and political changes and new agreements are difficult to reach. The religious-secular divide in Israel is a contemporary source of concern as relations between religious and secular are perceived as deteriorating to a potential "culture war" and a threat to Israel's social fabric. (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 173)

This cleavage, more than any other, represents a host of other complex identity issues related to religion and the state and has never been fully explored in the public forum for the sake of the consociational status quo.

Perhaps the most contentious issue in Israel, and indeed, a difficult challenge for the government, is the question of "Who Is a Jew?" The "controversy is probably the most saline

and familiar of secular-religious issues in Israel. The passion it aroused (and, in different forms, still arouses) relates to the fact that it calls into question the very criteria of belonging to the Jewish people" (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 33). This is a particularly important question in Israel due to the Right of Return: The ability of any recognized person of Jewish ancestry to immigrate to Israel is reliant upon that individual's identity as a Jew.

> From the religious-halachic perspective…one's Jewish identity…is measured not by the degree of one's faith or observance, but rather by one's ethnocommunal origins: anyone born to a Jewish mother is Jewish, even in the total absence of faith…whereas a deeply devout individual lacking maternal Jewish origins is not. In sharp contrast, the modern secular view understands identity as a freely chosen, consciousness-determined quality that cannot be imposed by formal, external criteria such as those provided by Halacha. One is, in this view, what one says one is (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 33)

This distinction speaks to the very nature of the state and Jewish identity, the place of consociationalism versus a multicultural state built from the components of its disparate citizens.

The Jewish Agency, tasked with outreach to the Jewish population in the Diaspora, arranges aliyah, or immigration to Israel, through various programs. According to the Jewish Agency, one can be culturally Jewish (Walzer & Lorberbaum et al., 2006, p. 435) or, indeed, not meet the rigid definition of Orthodox Judaism, in order to move to Israel. Numerous immigrants, including largely those who have come in the immigration waves from Russia and Ethiopia, find themselves in a situation where they are full-fledged Israeli citizens, serve in the army, yet are not recognized as being Jewish by the Rabbinate, a government ministry. This leads to a situation where they are unable to marry within the country or partake in various personal-sphere services dictated by the government.

One potential loophole to this has been the creation of a military program called Nativ, a conversion program in the army, which is extremely basic (Cohen, 2008, p. 118). It allows converts, in a very short time, to have a government-sanctioned conversion that does not necessarily conform to ultra-Orthodox standards; rather, it meets a minimum basis as dictated by the largely National Religious Military Rabbinate (Soeters & Meulen, 2007, p. 131). This type of conversion fulfills the requirements by the civilian Rabbinate as well and allows someone stuck in the situation of not being able to fully receive religious recognition

as being Jewish to have a quick conversion and, in many cases, still remain secular. This would not be possible with an ultra-Orthodox conversion as the ultra-Orthodox rabbinical courts require that one not only complete extensive studying during the course of at least a year, but also maintain a religious lifestyle following the conversion.

In a recent case, a woman sought a divorce after more than a decade of marriage that had taken place in a religious court. The religious court judge ruled that as the woman converted but did not maintain a religious identity, her conversion was retroactively nullified, thereby invalidating her marriage and, as a result, none of her children was considered Jewish. This was immediately challenged in a secular court, and it was ultimately found that the religious judge overstepped his boundaries as is it unclear, but unlikely, that a religious judge can retroactively nullify a conversion that was properly executed and done in good faith (Dorff, 2007, p. 7; Einhorn, 2009 p. 176). The status of the religious courts in the public sphere is very much a topical issue of great importance for secular Israelis and is intrinsically linked to the many other issues related to state and religion.

Kosher in government

One of the accommodations of the government to the status quo, since the founding of the state, has been that all state institutions, including the armed forces, government offices, et cetera, are required to abide by Jewish dietary laws—the laws of kashrut. “All institutions that receive money from the public treasury—including the army, schools, hospitals, universities, and government missions abroad—must observe Jewish dietary laws” (Arian, 2009, pp. 88–89). Interpretation of these laws varies from sect to sect, and a uniform set of guidelines has been established by the government to ensure that all branches of the government have a simplified and unified version of kashrut laws and dictates. This is particularly an issue in the armed forces where the military standard, though strict, was perceived by some to be lax in certain areas, and, due to religious request, a greater degree of kashrut was created allowing ultra-Orthodox soldiers access to food that they would consider more kosher, meeting the stringencies of their particular rabbis and sects.

The requirement to have all establishments in government facilities kosher, such as the cafeteria in the Knesset, has been challenged numerous times as many see it as discriminatory. For example, non-religious or non-Jewish members of parliament are

required to maintain a kosher standard, which they claim essentially violates their freedom of religion. In reality, however, individuals have the option of eating non-kosher food anywhere they like, including in a government office, with the exception of kosher-regulated eating areas. While this is not always the case (as offices in the military with kosher certification), alternative possibilities are available if one is interested in options beyond kosher. Balancing freedom of religion and the dictates of Jewish law is complicated and currently follows ultra-Orthodox practices, as do many government policies and decisions.

> While kashrut is observed in public (State) institutions, the market creates many alternatives for those interested in non-kosher food. The power of secularism in terms of demand and supply is one reason why many in the religious public remain skeptical of the ability of religious consumerism to influence the public sphere (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, p. 89)

B. Political Sociology

Politics in Israel are particularly fractious. There has never been a majority government in the history of the state. Few local political parties or interests are reflected in the Knesset, which is comprised of national political parties. Within most of national politics, as the centre of the country where the majority of Israelis live is so small, parties are able to reach out to many very different demographics (Mahler, 1981, p. 60; Steinberg, 2008, p. 315). With the exception of ultra-Orthodox parties, and perhaps Arab parties, Israelis generally do not vote along strict sectarian lines; rather they vote for many different issues on the public agenda, as well as along the lines of religious, political, social, and economic platforms. Because of this, ruling of the Knesset is comprised of a coalition government formed with parties that make up the majority in the Knesset. Political manoeuvring is often done using political compromise and, as a result, many issues, particularly those regarding the ultra-Orthodox, are difficult to push through without first forming a consensus. Even determining the underlying numbers can be difficult as

> political polling doesn't work very well in Israel. Many pollsters failed to predict Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's narrow victory... [in 1996]. Critics from the right wing say that's because the pollsters undercount such important, and largely conservative, voting blocs as ultra-Orthodox Jews and Russian immigrants (Contreras, 1999, p. 46)

Except for a brief flirtation with direct election for prime minister, which only lasted one term, Israelis generally vote for a list composed by each political party in which their top candidates are listed, and depending on the number of seats they receive, are allotted accordingly.

There have been various movements within Israeli history by the ultra-Orthodox community to become part of, or separate from, the Israeli political scene. For many years, the ultra-Orthodox viewed involvement with the state political process as de facto acceptance of the secular nature of the Israeli state and chose, for the most part, to remain on the sidelines. Though this was the case for many years, a new trend has begun to emerge where, due to religious voting blocs that maintain strict party discipline, the ultra-Orthodox can introduce a great deal of political leverage, perhaps even disproportional leverage, in a political parliamentary system that has never had a majority government.

Given the nature of the Israeli polity, in which a large ultra-Orthodox swing vote can make or break a coalition, many key issues are decided in favour of ultra-Orthodox interests to enable the political system to run smoothly. Ultra-Orthodox leadership for many years, even following the change in ultra-Orthodox political organization, chose not to lead government ministries for many of the same reasons. This, too, in time changed, where control, for example, of the Education Ministry by the ultra-Orthodox—or for that matter, other crucial ministries such as the religion portfolio or the Interior Ministry—are perceived to be key elements to the social, economic, and cultural factors necessary to maintain what many ultra-Orthodox consider their traditional way of life. This radical shift in political dynamics has had a great effect on the way in which the political process functions in Israel.

C. The Haredi Education System

The Haredi educational system and, indeed, the education system for all Israelis are issues of great contention and part of the most fundamental fault lines in the religious/secular debate. What fundamental school systems teach and what they do not, what is purposely included and excluded, and what is subsidized and what is not, are all crucial aspects of how society shapes and re-enforces itself. This section briefly examines secular versus religious schools with a particular emphasis on funding. This is important to understanding the emphasis the ultra-Orthodox community places on the religious education system and the

way in which, through political manoeuvring and allocation of public funds, the secular government attempts to influence or extend a degree of control into the ultra-Orthodox educational sphere.

> To properly appreciate the connection between Israeli secular culture and Judaism, it is useful to examine the State education system. The State school system in Israel for Jews (there is a separate system for Arabs) is divided into two parallel sub-systems, one religious and the other "secular." Children of the religious subculture (not the ultra-Orthodox), raised according to Jewish Orthodox beliefs and behaviors, attend State religious schools. There is also an independent Orthodox system, which is State-financed, but directed by the ultra-Orthodox community. What can be observed is that even the "secular" state schools follow a curriculum with large doses of Old Testament texts and Orthodox law. The State rationale for this is that they are building blocks of Jewish national identity, and without them such an identity would be totally devoid of content and meaning. The main difference between rabbinical Judaism and what is taught in Israeli state schools is the relative absence of the Talmud, which is perceived as an expression of Diaspora culture. In contrast, the State favors the Old Testament, representing a mythic, glorious, Jewish past rooted in the promised land. (Beit-Hallahmi, 2007, p. 163)

This section examines the state education system, various elements of recognized schools, what it means to be an official school, and exempt schools. It also examines the various levels of education in the ultra-Orthodox community from primary schools *cheder* through *Yeshiva Gedoleh-Kollel* and, ultimately, the importance that these educational institutions have within the ultra-Orthodox community.

State educational system

The current education system in Israel traces its roots to the pre-state settlement movement. There was a need to balance the educational curriculum with many vying factors. It was also important, in light of the many different backgrounds coming to a new society, to have a common educational approach.

> Under the British mandate, the Yishuv enjoyed complete autonomy in educational matters. In addition to the three official school systems of the Yishuv, one of them Religious Zionists (Mizrachi), AY [Agudat Yisrael] had its own independent school system. In 1953 the State education law extensively abolished the independent school systems and established two state

> systems instead, one secular and one religious, the latter under the *de facto* control of the NRP [National Religious Party]. The independent system of AY [Agudat Yisrael] was brought under state financing, without real state supervision (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 141)

Within the state educational system today, there are various educational opportunities for Israeli citizens. More specifically, within the educational system examined in this thesis—that of the ultra-Orthodox—there are various degrees of secular education brought into the school curriculum, and, as a result, there is a corresponding degree of government funding for schools in each particular type of framework. This thesis will examine a number of these educational arrangements.

It is interesting to note that the degree of educational acquiescence of schools participating in teaching the mandatory secular curriculum, in Hebrew known as the LIBA, says a great deal about the schools' educational approach. This speaks to the way in which they balance secular and religious subjects in order to get public funding as well as teach the core religious subjects that their community requires (see Topel, 2012, pp. 63–64). There is a wide range in educational offerings depending on the framework. The completely integrated schools teach a full religious and a full secular curriculum, while at the opposite end, the extremely Orthodox schools teach no secular subjects and offer a fully religious curriculum. Religious schools without a secular educational component, in many cases, receive little to no funding. There are many different opinions as to the place of education in the ultra-Orthodox community.

The repercussions of required primary secular education are apparent in many aspects. This is the case not only in funding shortages for schools (such as the prime minister's lunch program for schools that teach the full secular curriculum), but also with educational outcomes. The transitional programs that many groups have tried to institute aim to bring ultra-Orthodox students, both males and females, to the educational point where they are able to be competitive in the workforce. A fundamental lack of basic secular subjects makes these efforts difficult, and much bridging work is required in order to find a compromise for ultra-Orthodox matriculation within the secular education system.

> Historically, Haredi schools refused to accept government funds and sought support from outside the government and even outside the country. This was due to their refusal to submit their curriculum to government scrutiny and conform to the scholastic demands of the

> Ministry of Education. However, due to economic and political factors, a number of arrangements have been institutionalized that permit many [of these demands]. (Bogoch, 1999, p.125)

The state provides free primary education to all its citizens, yet there are various school boards that govern the implementation and accreditation of schools outside the purview of the Ministry of Education, such as those with various religious backgrounds. New situations become complicated when communities try to balance the social needs of the community to preserve hegemony over educational matters, yet at the same time wish to integrate in the long term and not be faced with the challenges inherent in educational gaps.

> Various forms of state-supported religious education -- from national religious schools to Haredi -- have been available to parents who prefer it. Parallel to these religious educational systems, a secular or national education system serves roughly 75% of Israel's children (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 10)

1. The recognized but not official schools

In the recognized but not official school educational construct, the school is recognized as an official school, and many, if not all, teachers are accredited and licensed through the Ministry of Education; secular subjects are taught, if not to the full extent of the curriculum, as a significant part of it. These schools, however, are run as religious schools or schools having a primarily religious mandate and, therefore, do not fully fit into either the secular Ministry of Education-run schools or into the grouping of an ultra-Orthodox school with its primary educational method that of religious instruction. These schools are recognized but not official as they receive lesser funding than a school that is recognized and official and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

> Haredi schools [decided] to accept government funding while retaining … control of the curriculum and the criteria for hiring teachers in their institutions. Basically, there are two types of arrangements between Haredi schools and the government: the “recognized but not official” schools, and the “exempt schools.” (Bogoch, 1999, p. 125)

The Ministry of Education's category of "recognized but not official" schools includes not only Haredi schools but Christian schools and other educational institutions that prefer not to follow the government curriculum. In this arrangement, the school receives about 90% of the funding per pupil that the public schools receive. Teachers at these schools are not employees of the government, but rather of the school or public body associated with the school (such as a church). The schools thus have greater leeway in employing teachers, although in theory they are supposed to work according to the hours and pay structure that are set by the government (Bogoch, 1999, p.125).

> Conflicts over religious education were resolved in Israel on the basis of granting religious schools a vast degree of autonomy in conducting their own affairs, and allocating them governmental resources according to their proportional share of students. The systems of religious education have retained their autonomy even after the enactment of the Law of State Education (Don-Yehiya, 1999, p. 89)

2. The "exempt" schools

Exempt schools are a third category: schools that are exempt from oversight by the Ministry of Education; schools in this category normally represent the majority of ultra-Orthodox schools. "The arrangement characterized as 'exempt' refers to the exemption of parents who send their children to these schools from compliance with the compulsory education act, which requires children to attend recognized schools" (Bogoch, 1999, p. 126). Compared to secular schools, the per student funding rate is significantly lower and varies depending on how much of the secular curriculum subjects is taught at the school. Yet authority for the curriculum taught at these schools lies with their independent school boards, such as a religious school board, rather than the Ministry of Education.

This arrangement has been in place since the 1970s, and although there are still requirements for the physical plant of this school and accreditation or licensing of teachers through various organizations, the standards for an exempt school are much more relaxed compared to the rigorous standards the Ministry of Education sets for secular schools. In the

> arrangement, [which] was set up in 1974, schools in the "exempt" category receive but 70% of the funding per child that public schools receive…[and they] are completely independent regarding curriculum, teachers, school hours, and so on. The school buildings must meet certain safety requirements and children at these schools are insured as are children in other

> schools in the public system. However, other than basic budgetary matters, there is no supervision by the government (Bogoch, 1999, p. 126)

This allows religious schools to have a greater degree of autonomy; therefore, they are able to instruct their students with a particular emphasis on religious rather than secular subjects and still receive a degree of funding.

> Despite the fact that there is so little interference by the government in exchange for funding they receive, it is still a major ideological statement for Haredim to enter into this arrangement and accept government funds. One Talmud Torah that had previously not received any funds and decided to become one of the "exempt" schools had a vigil outside the school every day at lunchtime where Psalms were said by members of the Haredi community who object to this perceived defection. In another case, a girls' school that joined the "exempt" arrangement appeared in the Ministry of Education listings of "exempt" and "recognized" schools under a different name from the name that appeared on the school building by which it was known to the community at large, in order not to publicize its new status. In addition to these two arrangements, there are some Haredi schools that have opted to be associated with the regular state religious schools, and those students may even have to write state matriculation exams. On the other hand, there are still some schools that have remained completely independent and have no official connection with the government whatsoever. (Bogoch, 1999, p.127)

3. Primary schools: cheder

The *cheder*, the primary school, is the centre of educational transmission, the first step in Haredi education. Schools such as the cheder that teach in a pedagogical style concerned with learning by rote as well as social acculturation into the ultra-Orthodox community have seen increasing numbers of students in recent years. "The percentage of pupils in ultra-Orthodox primary schools increased from approximately 11% in 1995–1996 to approximately 27% in 2007–2008" (Yitzhaki, 2010, p. 14). There are many factors behind this, but the cheder has seemed to be crucial to the transmission of social and cultural values. The fundamental concepts of ultra-Orthodox life are transmitted, and societal norms are generated through an ongoing process of educational instruction. The cheder is the first formative building block in a lifetime of education and is seen as a crucial first building block towards achieving scholarly greatness through successive programs. At this level, the

ultra-Orthodox cheder perhaps also serves weaker students who continue along with their peers but might otherwise be less encouraged to continue to successive levels of scholarly knowledge and perhaps would be diverted to something else. Due to peer pressure and other factors, these students stay within their society loosely involved in some type of Jewish learning.

> Haredim transmit their culture and values from generation to generation....We observe how they are transformed into Haredim. Indeed, through its teachers and rabbis, students at each successive educational level are introduced to a version of life that makes them conscious of their own tradition and protects them against acculturating to secular influences. Some of the most profound passions of Haredi Judaism were actually observed in the classroom...as little Haredim were being fashioned (Shaffir, 1993, pp. 459–460)

4. Yeshiva gedolah/kollel

The *yeshiva gedolah*, or literally *the higher yeshiva*, is the equivalent to a high school. This is where graduates of the *yeshiva ketanna* (the little yeshiva), the cheder primary school and middle school, matriculate to. The distinction between yeshiva gedolah and *kollel* is that members of the kollel are more loosely organized and usually become members of a kollel after they marry. It is important to note that the kollel is not merely an educational institution; it is an all-encompassing social environment. Within the yeshiva, there is significant peer and authority approval for leading a life that tends towards the study of higher Jewish texts in the yeshiva world. Belonging to or being associated with a particular yeshiva has financial repercussions both in terms of stipends and other payments from the government as well as private funding. In addition, there is a social dynamic outside the yeshiva, in which members of the yeshiva family will also be associated with each other in a social environment, including wives who work while their husbands study in yeshiva on a daily basis.

> There is one economic incentive for Haredi men to excel in their studies. Arranged marriages are still a Haredi norm. The best Talmudic scholars often marry daughters of well-to-do Haredim. The men are supported by their fathers-in-law, who often provide furnished apartments and substantial stipends. But the well-to-do are on the wane. Most Haredi men marry women with career prospects as bleak as their own. Like the men, women are forbidden by Haredi leaders from studying in universities, for fear they will be brainwashed by secularist teachers. (Makovsky, 1997)

There have been some changes to this pattern, with some individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community seeking education in vocational schools. These newly created schools are gender segregated and provide an environment tailored to the religious and cultural nuances of the ultra-Orthodox community (Lupo, 2003; Cohen, 2006). There are many issues with this approach, however, as the schools tend to be of lower academic status and offer only a very narrow array of program options (Finkelman, 2011).

The yeshiva is the quintessential expression in Israel of ultra-Orthodox values and continuity and has for a great part shaped the current situation with ultra-Orthodox learning in Israel. This stands in stark contrast to the situation in the yeshiva in the Diaspora in which yeshiva learning at a higher level is usually based on merit, and the yeshiva itself operates as a meritocracy promoting the most learned or skilled to positions of authority and, ultimately, communal leadership.

> For over a century, Jewish communities in Eastern Europe and the United States have supported a few of their best and brightest would-be rabbis, giving them stipends to study the Talmud. But what's happened among Israel's Haredim in recent decades is that all males are expected to become full-time students...[it is argued] that only if all men are funneled into the system and insulated from modern life will first-rate Talmudic scholars emerge. (Makovsky, 1997)

Due to the overwhelming numbers of ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students who choose to stay in the yeshiva rather than integrate through national service of some type or join the labour market even at a more advanced stage, the role of the yeshiva in Israel's ultra-Orthodox community has dramatically changed. It is, therefore, important to understand how the yeshiva relates to society and what can be done to integrate the yeshiva structure itself and the social elements of its students into a larger social paradigm that is more productive for many and leads to greater opportunity for the gifted view.

> Haredi fundamentalism is predicated on the *yeshiva* as the exclusive site where the authentic version of Judaism may be learned and where one can actualize the Haredi lifestyle. This community is thus comprised of a plethora of *yeshivot*, and all men and their families must belong to a specific *yeshiva*. What is of significance is that the *yeshiva* is a "total institution" that covers the entire breadth of the lifecycle of the individual, and as a place of prayer and

> study, a framework for socializing and leisure, and a community center providing material aid, housing, and psychiatric support. The *yeshiva* scholar is asked to withdraw from all worldly practices and totally devote himself to intellectual and spiritual activities. He is considered a virtuoso of text and, as such, interprets sacred codes governing everyday behaviors. *Torah* study is the goal to be sought all day long, and interrupting this duty, for any purpose, is defined as a sin. For this reason national service (particularly the army), or economic dealings, or other state duties are considered profanations of the study of *Torah* and therefore violations of central community taboos. (Stadler et al., 2008, p. 220)

The primacy of yeshiva learning in Haredi society is crucial to its position within the ultra-Orthodox community. On the whole, the yeshiva is a critical contributing factor to the spiritual sense by which the overall community governs itself. Within the Haredi sphere of influence, a social framework is established as a bulwark against secularization, and a certain ethos is transmitted through learning. This seeks to counter outside secular influences, and interruption of this process through various forms of integration or interruptions such as participation in national service runs counter to this yeshiva mission. From the ultra-Orthodox communities' perspective, the yeshiva is perceived as a critical element in perpetuating the spiritual well-being of all Israelis even if this is not recognized by secular society. It is, therefore, a critical mission of the ultra-Orthodox community to perpetuate a system that expands on these values.

> From the Haredi perspective, the yeshiva's unique character, its indispensability to Jewish flourishing, justifies its controversial release from near-universal obligation [of serving in the military].…Yeshivas are total support systems and total socialization frameworks that aim at enclosing the student fully in the world of Halacha, learning, and holiness….Hence, disrupting the course of study or adulterating the totality of the yeshiva environment by years of army service is seen as profoundly damaging to the yeshiva's entire raison d'être (Cohen & Susser 2000, p. 22)

The yeshiva as a nexus of social cohesion is an essential part of the transmission of values and the reinforcement of societal norms. It is, therefore, apparent that the role of the yeshiva within the ultra-Orthodox community from pre-statehood days to the present interaction has increasingly grown. This can be analyzed through many different avenues such as the complete evolution of life cycle issues, marriage, financial responsibility,

integration into the job market, and so on. In addition to the strictly textual basis for learning, studying in the yeshiva and its associated periphery reinforces and perpetuates a cycle of life within the ultra-Orthodox community that influences its members. This becomes a function of the way in which the ultra-Orthodox community creates the fabric of many aspects of its communal life.

As a result of the central role the yeshiva plays in the ultra-Orthodox community, there is a great degree of insulation from secular society with the goal of seeking to create a society of learners. These differences can vary widely in terms of the age of yeshiva students from high school to middle age and beyond, including the age of various lifecycle events such as marriage and the age at which individuals in the community have children. In addition, many other factors create a society with stark differences to secular or even moderately religious society. It is apparent that the yeshiva and the lower-level educational institutions that prepare students for the yeshiva are at the core of the ultra-Orthodox community's propagation of religious values. Understanding the yeshiva structure is crucial to understanding the underlying motivational factors of the ultra-Orthodox community.

> The haredim managed to halt the demographic erosion and to build a kind of closed community that could shut out unwanted influences.…Young men were kept in school not only through their childhood and adolescence but long past their marriage, and in an environment from which all secular education and influences were carefully excluded....What made this isolation possible, paradoxically, was the greater flow of funds from the outside….Most of these funds came from the State, either through direct subsidy of "independent" haredi schools or through the employment of haredi women as teachers in State religious schools. (Dowty 2001, p. 179)

Moreover,

> State subsidies for yeshivot are based on enrollment, so yeshivot have no interest in terminating their students, bona fide or otherwise. Thus in 1993 the number of full-time adult male yeshiva students reported by the Ministry of Religious Affairs was 50,000, and in 1997 it was 71,000. These numbers, the accuracy of which is notoriously doubtful, represent the entire cohort of draft eligible men in the Haredi communities. Both the numbers and the phenomenon of entire cohorts that go on to advanced religious studies in yeshivot are without parallel in Jewish history. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, pp. 143–144)

The current conditions of ultra-Orthodox education have not developed in isolation. Funding and social attitudes over time have led to the important profile of yeshiva education to the exclusion of all else within the ultra-Orthodox community. This means that once this particular system is firmly entrenched, it becomes increasingly difficult to untangle what has become a complex social issue. It is interesting to note that this state of affairs is unique in the Jewish historical experience, certainly in the Diaspora, but in the context of Israel as well. In order to untangle this situation for the benefit of Israeli society as a whole but also for the conditions of the ultra-Orthodox community, new approaches need to be undertaken. The natural societal development of this system, through reinforcement and other measures, has made the possibility of intervention difficult. Nevertheless, it is critical to improve social and economic conditions. Further complicating this is the status quo, which involves yeshiva learning as the primary goal of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. This is a central facet of the ultra-Orthodox community and is a reflection of a long-standing historical truth. Developing a social standard in which a particular reality is represented makes it difficult to address the usefulness of large segments of the population learning in yeshiva. Therefore, this issue must be addressed as part of a comprehensive examination of ultra-Orthodox education and funding and must critically involve the ultra-Orthodox community in this process. The ultra-Orthodox community must realize the importance of maintaining a homeostatic balance within its community as well as in Israeli society as a whole.

5. Funding

There is a constant struggle for funding for ultra-Orthodox institutions. This difficulty arises between the gap in funding for religious and secular education, particularly in institutions that are geared solely towards religious teaching. This creates a constant struggle between secular and religious educational schools for funding. Yeshivas are, therefore, required not only to compete with secular institutions for funding from the government, but also with fundraising from private sources as well. The push for funding ties religious schools into the larger state economic picture and creates a focus point of tension. Due to the contentious nature of ultra-Orthodox nonparticipation in Israeli society, this particular issue of funding can and often does expand into a host of other—perhaps nonrelated—issues that surround the secular and religious divide.

For the ultra-Orthodox community, funding is recognized as critical to expand the essential interests of the community. This follows all the other aspects of privileges and rights associated with maintaining a society of learners set apart from secular society. As noted elsewhere, this is moving in the opposite direction of historical ultra-Orthodox norms. While there has always been a degree of separation from secular society, this has usually been coupled with a great degree of self-reliance, using the secular government as a primary source of funding while at the same time having a strict line of nonparticipation within secular society, delineating the inherent paradox in ultra-Orthodox education.

> For the ultra-Orthodox parties, such funding is an existential interest, as it allows the existence of a society of learners, exempt from military service and work, which has characterized Israel's ultra-Orthodox society for the past three decades in complete contradiction to what is common among ultra-Orthodox Jews in Europe and the United States (Naor, 2008, p. 79)

The issue of funding came to a head when university students recently protested to the prime minister about funding for ultra-Orthodox educational institutions when university students are not being funded at all or at similar levels.

> The budget was found already to include a provision for the contested benefit for the Haredim. At dawn on October 27th [2010], university students released a gaggle of loudly crowing cocks on the pavement outside Mr. Netanyahu's quiet suburban home. "Wake up, BB," they chanted before being carted off by police. "The students are worth more." (*The Economist*, 2010, p. 50)

Many secular university students feel that it is crucial for the government to re-evaluate its stance vis-à-vis the ultra-Orthodox educational institutions and reprioritize secular students who currently bear the brunt of their own educational expenses and further down the line are responsible for paying the taxes that subsidize the ultra-Orthodox community yet do little to subsidize secular education.

D. The Military and the ultra-Orthodox Community

One of the most contentious issues that currently face the ultra-Orthodox community and secular society is that of military or national service. “As a rule, ultra-Orthodox men are not drafted to the Israeli Defense Force. They comprise a legal category of those for whom ‘Torah studies is their sole craft’ (in Hebrew: *Toratam omanutam*)” (Hakak, 2009, p. 112). This particular issue is one of many fault lines in relations among various segments of Israeli society, yet this particular one of national service holds a particular degree of tension. This is because national service, which is commonly viewed as a form of military service (though there are exceptions), is perceived by the ultra-Orthodox community as fundamentally undermining its essential way of life. Indoctrination in secular values, military culture, and so on creates in the eyes of the ultra-Orthodox community someone who is the antithesis of a lifelong Torah learner. One of the key arguments that run back and forth along this particular issue is two very different negotiating points relating to the interpretation of military service. For the ultra-Orthodox community, the physical aspect of military service, which is the most questionable in terms of exposure to outside influences, is interpreted as being less valuable than the spiritual contribution that the ultra-Orthodox community makes to Israel as a whole. The exact opposite is true when the secular community views the spiritual contribution the ultra-Orthodox community makes as insignificant and greatly protests the lack of physical participation in national service. This underlines a fundamental difference between these two camps with very different ideas of what national service or military service is and can be.

From a broader perspective, understanding how military service - and the controversy surrounding it - interacts with the ultra-Orthodox community is part and parcel with issues of identity. Learning Jewish subjects is considered for ultra-Orthodox men to be their primary vocation, and for such, they receive exemption from military service. Throughout time, for the ultra-Orthodox community, the military exemption has generally become an entrenched attitude. This differs from the outlook of the Jewish Diaspora. In the Diaspora, national service (though not usually military service) is understood to be an important part of contributing to society. Perhaps this is a different way to view the state and represents an element of the drive towards preserving religious autonomy with all the associated societal and financial implications. All the controversies surrounding military service and the ultra-Orthodox community intensify an “us versus them” complex in which the ultra-Orthodox community feels apart and alienated from Israeli society and vice versa.

Yitzchak Cohen notes that military service may be a barrier to individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community, but at the same time, things are changing. The way in which the military affects society is changing, and there is now greater accommodation for ultra-Orthodox individuals to participate within the military framework and, as a result, become included in society. Moreover, the military, perhaps, is changing in terms of societal importance, yet exactly how this would work remains to be seen.

> *Yes actually, I believe it does. Well, you know what, if you asked me the question 10 years ago or even 15 years ago, I would say it does. Now it's a little bit different. They have—the fact that the government, and many politicians, and other people, have created ways for Orthodox people to serve in the military through different—like Nahal Haredi, for example, where they can be involved with other— just men, because they won't be around women, and they keep a high level of kosher, and davening in the morning, and all that sort of stuff, I think that it— right now, maybe we could say it doesn't necessarily serve as a barrier, but certainly before they had those ways for them to serve, and still keep everything they wanted to, it did serve as a barrier, because obviously people look down on people that didn't serve in the military, and they didn't have a way to do it. ... I don't necessarily think that every ultra-Orthodox person will still want to serve in a Nahal Haredi group, or in a Hesder Yeshiva. They might just find it still unacceptable based on their standards, and I feel that it is important to accommodate what their needs are. And since that's something that they can't do, I think they shouldn't necessarily be looked down on, and I think they should be accepted in the workforce and accepted in society, when they're ready to join.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

Even though the specifics of military service in terms of numbers, in terms of manpower, and in terms of the actual need for ultra-Orthodox individuals to serve in the military is debatable, there is no doubt that this controversial topic has thrust the military service debate into a central position in the Israeli internal political dialogue. “The peace process has lessened the Israeli army's need for every last available soldier. Indeed, the cost of maintaining a large army has led the military to recruit more selectively among females and to avoid enlisting immigrants who arrive in Israel in their 30s and 40s” (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 88). Nevertheless, there are constant and ongoing negotiations with the ultra-Orthodox regarding the status quo. This particular issue, which has often been played out as a game of brinkmanship between the ultra-Orthodox community and the government, where each side has tried to push the other to see how far it will compromise, has left this situation with a great deal of disproportional importance. Military service is perceived by the ultra-Orthodox community as being a decisive end to their way of life while on the flipside, secular society sees military service as integral in the development of a cohesive national

identity. While there are various alternative frameworks, they do not necessarily bridge the gap in a definitively inclusive way.

> Many Israelis are also aggravated…that Haredim are extended full voting rights and social services, while at the same time are exempt from military service. This…has become a sticking point because compulsory military service is central to the life and identity of all secular Israelis. Most Israelis resent that the Haredim garner the benefits of a burgeoning economy and strong military while contributing little to either. (Simon, 1998, p. 14)

Thus, for the majority of ultra-Orthodox men, military or national service remains a contentious issue with regular ongoing flare-ups regarding the status and requirements of ultra-Orthodox individuals to serve the state.

1. Historical perspective on military service

Military service has historically been a contentious issue between the secular public and ultra-Orthodox community. However, in recent years, this debate has become more politicized. The debate has been a feature in various forms throughout the history of the state, and it is intrinsically linked with the development of a number of religious concessions to the ultra-Orthodox that David Ben-Gurion established through the status quo.

There are several elements to this. ***First,*** it is interesting to note that while limited exemptions were handed out from the founding of the state, exemptions continue to the present era. It was always the intention of Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, to have an integrated military as the ideal. This can be analyzed in a number of ways from the initial structure of the idea in which all citizens, regardless of religious group or entity, would be required to fulfill the same set of initial obligations. This aspect did not change, yet deferments or exemptions were given out; over time declaring his vocation as full-time higher level Jewish learning allowed an individual not to serve in the military.

> A mixture of motives induced Ben-Gurion to promise some concessions…[for military exemptions] as early as 1947. A charitable interpretation suggests that he sympathized with the need to salvage a way of life that the Holocaust had all but wiped out. Clinical pragmatism was probably equally germane. [As the] Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry was pondering…Palestine's future, it was important to give the Haredim as little reason as possible to [oppose] establishment of an Independent Jewish state.… hen the IDF came into

> existence the following year, Haredi females were excused duty altogether and draft deferments were granted to some 400 male students. (Cohen, 2008, p. 131)

Second, from the creation of the state, Ben-Gurion discouraged separate units such as the modern day Nahal Haredi, a separate religious unit that takes into consideration various religious sensitivities for a military unit. During the creation of the state, it was important to Ben-Gurion that all military units would be equal, and there would not be additional elements that would serve to separate soldiers serving in the same unit and distinguish among them in a country newly formed of immigrants from the Diaspora. Around the world, social cohesion was a crucial factor, and dividing soldiers on the basis of religious beliefs could only be perceived as a contentious move to further divide individuals separated by language, history, and culture.

> David Ben-Gurion, acting simultaneously as Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, waged a campaign to build a homogeneous army. He eliminated pre-State special units -- the Palmach and the Etzel -- which bore an external ideological and political identity...During the 1948 War of Independence, leading rabbis of the religious camp demanded that a separate military framework for religious soldiers be formed. (Drory, 2009, p. 162)

Religion, therefore, was used as a social lubricant to unite disparate individuals into common culture and society without taking it to an extreme. Through time, this has led to members of the ultra-Orthodox community not serving in the military at all, and as a result, this thinking was reformulated allowing ultra-Orthodox soldiers to serve in their own units.

Third, due to the structure of the country and religious freedoms, the ideal structure is built to accommodate the sensitivities of religious soldiers regardless of their level of affiliation. Soldiers, therefore, have religious rights within the context of the military.

> Religion does not exist as a segmented subculture within the overall Israeli military fabric. Rather, it constitutes one of the IDF's integral components. Within the force, traditional Jewish rites and symbols intrude on life in numerous spheres and at various levels. Besides addressing the specific requirements of troops who profess orthodox Jewish beliefs, they also act as integrative referents for the IDF as a whole. In the latter capacity, they generate a symbiosis between religion and military service that, even if not altogether unique, is certainly more pervasive than experienced in other modern armed forces. (Cohen, 1999, p. 389)

This is viewed by religious soldiers as a way to preserve their religious integrity and beliefs while at the same time serving in the largely secular military.

Balancing these factors while maintaining a system of religious rights and, at the same time, accommodating the majority of soldiers, who often tend to be secular, create a difficult situation that has been playing itself out in the military since the creation of the state.

> Ben-Gurion's credo influenced the relationship between religion and military service in Israel in three crucial respects. First, it rejected the notion that religious and secular citizens possess different sets of national obligations.…Military service was equally incumbent on both communities. Second, the same principle of equality also precluded religious troops from serving in segregated military formations…. However, …the military had also to accommodate itself to the particular needs of religious personnel.…the entire IDF framework needed to be structured in ways that would not alienate religiously observant troops or require them to contravene the dictates of traditional Jewish law. (Cohen, 1999, p. 388)

Nevertheless, although Ben-Gurion determined to create an integrated army, which ultimately would lead to the creation of an integrated society formed in a common experience, through time the ultra-Orthodox community has both withdrawn as well as has not been embraced by the secular military hierarchy. This is one of the most contentious issues in the religious/secular debate and is crucial to understanding how reintegration or some form of integration can happen to form a cohesive or perhaps multicultural Israeli society.

The IDF itself emerged from what had the potential to become a civil war among various independence movements in British Mandate Palestine vying for military and political control. Upon the formation of the state of Israel, the newly formed Israel Defense Forces became decidedly apolitical, and the military was driven to create a new form of social cohesion that did not rely on previous political identities or ideologies. The commonality among the Jews arriving from the Diaspora post-Holocaust, as well as Jews emigrating from Arab countries, was the underlying commonality of Judaism. Judaism was, therefore, used as a secular tool for uniting despaired individuals and creating a Jewish secular identity. This extends to many areas of the military historically, as well as in its present incarnation.

For example, each military base has, as its slogan, a passage from the Bible. Each soldier is sworn into the military using a Hebrew Bible if he or she is Jewish; otherwise a Koran or New Testament or other type of book is used. For religiously observant soldiers, linking the state's history with the current military is of key priority, and sites such as the Western Wall or Masada feature prominently in military lore and are distinct elements in the creation of a secular Jewish ethos.

> Remarkable…is the extent to which each major rite of passage in the Israeli military experience is suffused with ceremonies that deliberately arouse profound Jewish connotations.…At his or her induction, every new recruit receives a copy of the Bible -- which religious conscripts necessarily consider to be a sacred work and which secular troops have also been taught at school to regard as the most formative text in the Jewish literary corpus. Similarly evocative are the venues selected for the staging of passing-out parades. On completion of basic training,…each new cohort of paratroops is formally enrolled in Jerusalem by torch-light at the "Western Wall." The site is well chosen. Quite apart from being the sole remaining relic of the Second Temple destroyed in the year 70 CE, and hence a place of religious pilgrimage, the Western Wall is also located in the heart of the Old City where the paratroop corps was in action during the Six-Day War of 1967. In infantry brigades similar ceremonies take place at the heights of Massada, the last bastion of resistance to Roman rule during the Jewish rebellion of 66-70 CE. (Cohen, 1999, p. 392)

The difficultly this poses for religious soldiers is that aspects of Judaism are taken in a secular context and reinterpreted to teach the military a lesson or create a secular identity based on common Jewish ancestry. This is opposed by many in the ultra-Orthodox community who see it as warping fundamental values and promoting the military as a religious Jewish organization, when, in fact, it is an extension of the largely secular state government. This contradiction—the inherent religiosity of the state and the military—creates a conflict for many in the ultra-Orthodox community who do not necessarily believe in the religious supremacy of the state in matters military. Added to this, the use of religious symbols in the IDF is perceived as an attempt to create a new social paradigm through the military, based on the traditions, history, customs, and so on, of religious Judaism.

2. The military service debate

The military service debate is an excellent example of the distance between religious and secular Israelis regarding issues of security and the mortal and spiritual dangers society faces. The ultra-Orthodox view their participation in Jewish learning as an equally important contribution to the security of the state as that of their secular counterparts serving in the military. Religious learning takes on a new degree of social importance as it creates a society that is fully encompassed by the goal of male religious learning and all the associated social facets that come with an insulated life of religious service.

The issue of tolerance and acceptance within society is of great importance. It is important to have a cross-cultural understanding between the religious community and secular society. Because they occupy the same real space, yet may indeed be quite separate, it is important to accommodate these very different perspectives. Eliezer Weiss also notes that in his opinion, the age of enlistment in the military does not necessarily reflect ultra-Orthodox priorities, and this is a contentious issue, which needs to be discussed in terms of a holistic view of understanding religious priorities.

> *Yes, in a few ways. One, they don't know what— if you don't do the army you don't know what— if you always live in a religious community, you go to religious schools, you live in a religious neighborhood, you don't know what the general society is, you're going to function differently than if you do know what that is. You're going to be less tolerant because you don't know what the general world is. The army could be a very, very big factor in changing the way things are, if everybody had to go. Everybody, again, with exceptions—specific exceptions. ... that's why for instance, I don't think an 18-year old is ready for the army. Maybe at 20-22, I don't know what the breaking point would be, it depends on the boy. Like I said, I have sons who have been in the army and I never agreed that they should do it at age 18. If they have a strong enough base in Torah, then they can have the interaction with society at large, but if they're not mature enough for that, then they're not ready.* (Interview with Eliezer Weiss, 2011)

The religious education reinforced in the yeshiva is critical to preserving the ultra-Orthodox social order, and religious leaders believe that involving the ultra-Orthodox community in military service would diminish the ability of the ultra-Orthodox community to function.

> Spiritual guides of the Haredi community have always evinced an uncompromisingly resistant attitude towards conscription in the IDF…Over the long haul of history, they contend, the scrutiny of the Holy Texts have contributed far more than any other activity to the survival of the Jewish people. In the future too, diligent study of the Divine Law will continue to constitute Israel's primary lifeline as much to physical security on earth as to

> spiritual salvation in heaven. Thus: "other than the *Torah* we have no security; neither soldiers nor the IDF will help us." (Cohen, 1999, pp. 394–395)

The fear of integration and assimilation is ever present, and unlike historical periods of integration, the distance separating the secular and religious has never been narrower. The threat of secular individuals speaking a common language and, for the most part, aware of the religious particularities of Judaism would create an easier avenue to transition to secularism. The idea of military service is, therefore, viewed by the ultra-Orthodox community as being a vector to accomplish social integration at the expense of losing religious beliefs and mode of life.

> In contrast to other Jewish groups in Israel, especially the Zionist religious streams, Haredi leaders decided that in order to revive and reinforce Haredi culture they must keep members in the yeshiva away from the army. The ideal of masculinity and piety was to be attained only through a life of abstinence, ritual, and profound study, rather than becoming soldiers and defending the secular state. (Stadler et al., 2008, p. 221)

Secular citizens see national service in its various forms as the most important type of participation in the state. Despite a shift in national identity and various political upheavals throughout the years, it is still seen as an important facet to societal integration. This attitude does not extend to the ultra-Orthodox, and the attitude the ultra-Orthodox have towards the military has changed through time with the hardening of the position against military service.

> In early 1999, 200,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews…protested against the Supreme Court rulings viewed as hostile to their way of life. Nearby, 50,000 secular Israelis organized a counter-demonstration. One of the issues concerned extending the law allowing military exemptions for students in the yeshivoth. The rate of religious exemptions historically was about 4% of the annual number of enlistments. In 1998, the rate doubled to 8.2%. Over the last decade, the number of enlistments each year grew by an aggregate total of 50%, but the number of exemptions increased by 350%. For secular Israelis whose children complete their compulsory military service, the outrage is palpable. (Stein, 2002, p. 88)

Over time, the attitude that military service is in direct confrontation with the Torah lifestyle practiced by individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community has emerged, concomitant with the idea that military indoctrination is the antithesis of the values and the ideal religious

society that the ultra-Orthodox community strives for. Entrenched opposition supporting resistance to military service has become formidable and formalized over time, as evidenced by the ongoing shifts in the status quo arrangements.

This process involves both religious and secular elements of society during a long period of time, and there naturally are dissenters to these widely drawn lines in both camps. There are some ultra-Orthodox individuals who wish to participate but feel that military service is taboo and would hurt their chances of social integration, marriage, and so on. On the secular side, there are those that consider the ultra-Orthodox to be simply unfit for military service because "their loyalty is to their rabbis, not to any army commander. They also stop to pray three times a day, insist on food more kosher than the army now supplies, have no job skills because of their restricted education, and cannot mix with women -- who make up 30% of army personnel" (Beyer, 2000, p. 32). There are many supposed barriers to service, many of which can be worked around through compromises on both sides and a willingness to form new types of relationships with soldiers which take their backgrounds into account. This way of thinking has shown success with many minority groups and now needs a social change to bring up the level of acceptance of national service within the ultra-Orthodox community.

Deena Friedberg starts with the traditional refrain that the military already has enough soldiers who are secular and conscripted and, therefore, does not need to resort to drafting ultra-Orthodox soldiers. She continues to say that there must be equality in the way in which individuals are drafted into the military. This means that much as secular society would like members of the ultra-Orthodox community to be drafted into the military or an alternate program, secular individuals should be required to participate in a yeshiva program that would expose them to some of the values and teachings of ultra-Orthodox society. This would create a more comprehensive society while not necessarily giving an advantage to one side or the other. Clearly, this is a goal of the ultra-Orthodox society, which seeks to educate with its interpretation of Judaism. Perhaps in a more general sense, offering a program that has some type of Jewish educational component, which includes religious societal views, could benefit a secular society and vice versa.

> *Well, first of all they have enough soldiers that they don't have to draft anybody, and a lot of secular guys are opting out by leaving the country, so I don't think it should be forced. I think— somebody said, yeah, we'll send all our guys to the army, but you send your guys to*

> *yeshiva for one year as well. That would be very interesting. Maybe instead of, like, forced military conscription, everybody should, like, have, like, some kind of, like, mechinah program. One of my sons did that— he had like a year in mechinah where they prepare him for the army. So they should have something like that, where they could expose themselves to, like, a yeshiva background and also like a sort of army background. And the best thing to do is to try to see how we could, you know, unify, pull together*. (Interview with Deena Friedberg, 2011)

However, there is now appreciation on both sides of this issue that new ways of thinking need to be brought to the issue as secular leadership in the political sphere and the military see the need to become more inclusive. This is not only for ideological reasons but also due to the looming demographic crisis (Kaufman & Skirbekk, 2012, p. 198) as the ultra-Orthodox community outpaces the secular community many times in terms of the growing numbers of their population. On the religious side, there is still a great deal of hostility towards outright service, yet the addition of ultra-Orthodox military units and the creation of some national service frameworks has made more options palatable. There is still no widespread solution to this issue, and it remains contentious. It probably will remain so until the army experience will be viewed less as social engineering of the ideal Israeli and will be seen as a way to participate in an egalitarian fashion and not necessarily be restricted to compromising one's individual or societal values. At the same time, the underlying hostility towards national service with the goal of creating a society of learners is not itself necessarily based in factual history. This may be a reflection of ideals that do not exist now and perhaps never existed in the past. Finding a common ground has proved difficult, and the military service debate continues to be a focal point of societal integration, with each side rallying for a contribution it sees that it makes to the overall society in both the spiritual and the physical realms.

Nevertheless,

> in their opposition to the drafting of women for military service, the ultra-Orthodox were joined by the national religious community. The latter were not entirely comfortable with the position they adopted, however. They were discomfited by the feeling that in exempting religious women from service they were being derelict in their duties as committed Zionists who supported the national efforts of the young state. Hence, they urged their women followers not to exercise their right of exemption. They encouraged religious women to enter army service in the framework of certain religiously sponsored military and agricultural units (*nahal*). (Cohen & Susser 2000, p. 26)

While women in the national religious camp excluded themselves alongside the ultra-Orthodox community, alternative frameworks were created to encompass other types of national service. This alternative service is more appropriate to the outlook of the national religious individuals who would not otherwise serve in the military for religious reasons, but have options that meet both religious and ideological considerations. Moreover,

> each of the parties to the struggle [regarding women serving in the military or National Service] was allowed to adopt a solution it found suitable. The Haredi camp succeeded in avoiding inclusion of its women in the National Service. The national religious chose to implement the idea despite the absence of legal compulsion to do so. At present, national religious women, on a voluntary but widespread basis, serve in the National Service under government aegis. (Cohen & Susser, 2000, p. 27)

This example shows how it is possible to find an ideological middle ground and a framework that works for both the national interest and the religious and social considerations of various groups. While gender is one aspect of the ongoing disagreement over service, there are many others, and these aspects must also be taken into consideration to propose a new framework.

Haredi ideological motivations for non-service: history

Historical reasons for the Haredi ideological motivation for non-service are many and have changed through time. The constant is that from the creation of the state, there was an appreciation of the need for draft deferrals, and this may have happened for numerous reasons. It is quite possible that Prime Minister Ben-Gurion decided not to enforce the draft for the ultra-Orthodox community out of concern over dwindling numbers following the Holocaust and understanding the need to rebuild Torah Judaism. It may also be possible that there were political considerations involved, which encouraged Ben-Gurion not to force this particular issue in order to win political concessions in other areas. What is known is that a series of draft deferrals have been issued for the ultra-Orthodox community and have throughout the history of the state always included political, as well as religious and social dimensions, to this argument. While not formally written into law, these types of exemptions relate to the ideological basis for not serving in the military and the theological perspective that the higher level Jewish learning that the ultra-Orthodox community engages in

contributes to the spiritual well-being rather than the physical. According to the ultra-Orthodox community, this is equally as important and a great contribution towards the spiritual welfare of the state, without which the state could not exist.

These policies have led to the emergence of a new cultural paradigm, something previously not seen before in the context of Jewish history in the land of Israel nor in Jewish history in the Diaspora. By creating a situation where multiple generations have been involved with a particular ideological position to national service, the status quo has ultimately emerged not as a reflection of ancient history but as a new social creation closely tied to the ultra-Orthodox experience in the state of Israel. However,

> Haredi communities in Israel have grown exponentially in size and cohesion since 1948…[and they] now wield much greater political leverage than they once possessed, with a result that the scope of the accommodation reached in 1947 has been considerably expanded….In 1997 alone, 28,376 Haredi males (almost 7.5% of Israel's total conscript pool) were granted deferments from military service on the understanding that "the study of *Torah* [Jewish law] is their profession" -- a growth of some 17% since 1995 and a figure far in excess of anything imagined by either Ben-Gurion or his contemporaries. (Cohen, 1999, p. 395)

3. The central place of military service in Israeli society

The origins of military service were for both practical military reasons evidenced by the various wars in Israel's past and the great degree of national security that required maintaining control over relatively large borders in a demographically small country. Yet the military, aside from being an institution, also has wide-reaching social effects that impart a common starting point for Israeli citizens transitioning from teenage years into adulthood. This includes various Zionistic cultural religious values that are intended to homogenize people from disparate backgrounds who immigrate to the country from all walks of life. It also reinforces Hebrew as the national language and serves as a transition point for both new immigrants and Israeli citizens to transition from the military into lucrative civilian positions. This is a learning experience as well, as noted by Litan: "For many people, their…compulsory service may be the only time in their lives where they mix for an extended time on equal footing with others from very different backgrounds" (2002, p. 44). The military is central to Israeli society and has a very important place in the genesis of Israeli society since the founding of the state.

> Every citizen reaching the age of 18 must join the army by rule of law. Men have to serve for three years and women for two years. They are paid a symbolic salary, meaning they are actually obliged to volunteer to serve in the army. After they are released from duty, most Israeli men, and to a limited extent also women, have to serve in the reserve forces approximately one month per year for 20-30 years. For several decades, the deep militarization of Israeli society ensured that most people would serve in the army and relatively few have used the available justifications for not serving, e.g., religious reasons (especially for women), conscientious objection, or mental or physical disability. (Mizrahi, 2008, p. 157)

The role of military service has changed during time, yet military service, in its various forms, is both an integral part of the security of the state and a mechanism of social engineering. The stated goal of the military is that the military shapes society and society shapes the military.

The army shapes society by embodying the values and ethos of the founding Zionist principles. This is carried forward in the current era. Both in imaging the state initially and through the state formation period, the military has been seen as an agent of homogenization and a way to integrate disparate people from extremely different backgrounds, cultures, and societies into the new Israeli society. David Ben-Gurion stated that

> while the first mission of the IDF... is the security of the State, that is not its only task. The army must also serve as pioneering educational force for Israeli youth, both native born and immigrants. The IDF must educate a pioneering generation, healthy in body and spirit, brave and faithful, which will heal tribal and Diaspora divisions and implement the historic mission of the state of Israel through a process of self-fulfillment, by building the homeland and by making its deserts bloom. (Cohen, 2008, p. 31)

Essentially, this type of cultural programming serves to structure society along the lines of those who serve and those who do not. “Enlistment automatically architectures two distinct ‘tiers’ of citizenship…thereby creating a divide between those included in the most meaningful of all Israeli citizen rights and those excluded from it” (Cohen, 2008, p. 130). With this distinction come many social consequences. The immediate repercussions of service or non-service have changed through time, and each particular era takes on new

meaning in the context of the particular social issues. While the military as a means to cultural homogenization is touted as the national integrator, there are still many obstructions to creating a truly homogenous society. Military service does perhaps create a baseline of commonality established through various individuals in society, but on many levels there remain deep rifts.

> Notwithstanding Ben-Gurion's promotion of the IDF as a tool capable of inculcating citizenship as well as comradeship, the chances that conscription might eradicate Israel's societal differences were always slim. Cross-country studies of similar attempts to employ the military as a tool of social engineering indicate that not even under the best circumstances do armed forces perform as well as transmitters of allegedly homogenizing national norms. (Cohen, 2008, p. 108)

It is interesting that the military can often also precipitate perhaps unintended national change and integration. Military service is itself a meritocracy, and, as such, it had an effect on the integration of the Mizrachim (Sephardim) during the initial formation of the state where great numbers of Jews from Arab countries arrived in Israel and were integrated through military service. The same can be said of other rifts, such as cultural backgrounds, language, heritage, history, and religion, despite the fact that an overarching commonality of Judaism exists. The integration of religion into the military is at times difficult. It does not necessarily reflect a homogeneous society. The aspirations of religious integration in society were not necessarily as successful as Israelis may have hoped. This is perhaps a reflection of the divided nature of religion within Israeli society itself. A simple answer to this dilemma posed during the formation of the state to Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, was that religious people would serve wholly within their own units. However, this was not possible as seeming to give into a particular division would merely exacerbate the long-term detrimental effects of maintaining distinct military units and, by extension, distinct elements of society. This would, as a result, signal that society was not meant to be homogeneous rather than separate elements. Historically, considering this happened after the integration of Israel’s military for various competing factions (such as the Haganah, Etzel, Lechi, etc.), this distinction to integrate religious soldiers within larger secular units took on a very important mandate.

> Ben-Gurion dismissed suggestions that the IDF follow the segregationist precedent set by the *Haganah*, which had allowed religiously observant volunteers to serve in their own homogeneous units. "The creation of religious [military] units," was predicted in 1949 to a delegation of national-religious leaders, "[to] result in the creation of anti-religious units"' and thus undermine precisely the integrative ethos that conscription was supposed to promote. (Cohen, 2008, pp. 111–112)

Instead of separate units, ultimately, Ben-Gurion decided to create integrated homogeneous units that contained both religious and non-religious soldiers. This was done under the first chief military rabbi, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, who saw the military rabbinate as the mediating body between secular and religious soldiers and sought to maintain a line of religiosity in an overly secular atmosphere. This was done in various ways. Integration of Jewish religious practices in the IDF also served to bolster the IDF's mandate as the protector of the Jewish state and also helped to create commonalities within various units. Religious practices, which were considered to be important in the overall structure of the military, included the ability to receive religious materials, such as prayer books and other religious items, time allotted to prayer services, and a place in which to conduct prayer. In addition, a number of regulations were created to make the IDF more acceptable to religious soldiers. These included times for prayer, observance of kashrut in the military, Sabbath observance, and other organizational functions that sought to ensure that religious practice was more easily carried out in the day-to-day military life.

One of the interesting ways in which religious ceremony and practices were incorporated into the military is the many military traditions that have a particular Jewish character. This is interesting because over time, while perhaps the initial reasons for creating integrated units faded, and in contemporary times, the IDF has an ultra-Orthodox battalion, there are many religious elements that have become practically secular in nature, yet hail from religious origins. This includes the Friday night Kiddush service in which all soldiers, regardless of rank, religion, or background, participate as a military tradition, and each stage of the life cycle of a soldier in the military includes various ceremonies with religious significance. Many of these ceremonies are tailored to conform to particular religious beliefs, such as a swearing-in ceremony for Christian soldiers in the IDF uses a New Testament in the place of an Old Testament as used for Jewish soldiers. Nevertheless, the very fact that a

Bible is used and the way in which religion is included in almost all aspects of the IDF create a unifying commonality in which religious soldiers may feel more comfortable. By maintaining basic commonalities throughout the entire institution, such as kashrut, a soldier is more likely to be able to find commonalities, at least in certain respects, and as a result, the transition from citizen to soldier is eased somewhat.

> By far the most long-lasting of Goren's contributions to the moderation of religious-secular differences in the IDF was to initiate military rights in which both segments of the complement could jointly participate. For instance, he institutionalized the convention, which is still observed, whereby every Jewish soldier on active service, regardless of background and rank, attends a ceremony of blessing the wine *(kiddush)* that precedes the Friday evening meal and marks inauguration of the Sabbath. He also established a tradition whereby each major rite of passage in the Israeli military experience is marked by a pageant deliberately suffused with Jewish connotations. To this day, every new Jewish recruit receives a copy of the Old Testament, prefaced by an introduction that is written by the IDF Chief Rabbi of the day (Christians receive the New Testament, Muslims the Koran and Druze a Medallion). Likewise, passing-out parades are frequently held at Masada or the Western Wall in Jerusalem, venues suffused with Jewish associations to which the military chaplain, who is always one of the speakers, conventionally makes reference. (Cohen, 2008, p. 113)

The IDF is central in Israeli society on many levels and is a uniting factor among many in society. The army has historically been a social barometer allowing for transitions into society. While the military started with particular values, these changed over time as a reflection of the people serving in society. It is interesting to note how the institution of the military changed to become more inclusive and at the same time, changed the proto-Zionist Israelis serving in the military as social elite, as well as the less upwardly mobile new immigrants, particularly from non-Western societies. This meant that as a whole, the military was generally an important social integrator and through time adapted to the various cultural and social norms developing in Israel. While this change is positive and inclusive, there remains the issue of what happens to those who do not serve. The percentage of the population that does serve is very large, and this, therefore, marginalizes those who do not serve, such as members of the ultra-Orthodox community. As the military becomes ubiquitous in its presence in Israeli society, this has the effect of increasing the exclusionary

nature of military service for those who do not serve. Among people in the ultra-Orthodox community who do not serve, there exists a great deal of exclusion moving towards building an insular society and isolation because an individual did not serve in the military and has a more difficult transition into civilian life. This trend is slowly changing from historical highs when the national survival has been perceived in the context of military service. While through time this has been changing, the centrality of military service in Israel is still relevant. Military service in Israel among both secular and religious Israelis who serve in the military is a wide-reaching institution that an individual in civilian life will encounter in many different contexts. This paradigm carries through by the military reserves in which most men, and some women, following their military service, serve for a short period every year. This reinforces the hegemonic nature of the military ethos from a societal perspective, as well as reinforces the institution of the military and a shared commonality that exists among those who serve. For those who do not serve, the exclusion that they face on a societal level is even greater. Perhaps this is why some religious groups encourage their members to serve in order to gain access to various means of upward mobility in society. However, this is certainly not the norm.

The reason that the military at its core is seen as a flaw is its secular and Ashkenazi background deeply entrenched in the Zionist enterprise. While this has certainly changed through time, and the military in its contemporary form has a far wider range of ethnic diversity, religious diversity, and so on than found at large in some segments of Israeli society, there is still a give-and-take between the stringent military hierarchy and the elasticity of Israeli society. Therefore, “the military remains an important institution for the achievement of social status and citizenship rights” (Ben-Porat & Turner, 2008, p. 198).

4. Repercussions of non-service

There are many repercussions of non-service, including non-service in all the various available forms from military service to national service and other programs. Two of the critical factors associated with national service are economic integration in terms of the available opportunities for an individual having successfully completed national service, as well as social integration. It is interesting to note that the idea of non-service takes place at two distinct levels. On one hand, this issue very much involves the individual and is centered

on the individual's participation in national service. This is essentially a choice that each person is required to make individually. On the other hand, there is certainly a social component to this issue as well. Many social factors exist within, for example, the ultra-Orthodox community, as well as other factors that could influence an individual's decision to complete national service or serve in the military. This situation leads to intensely complex questions regarding the place of religion in both the public and private spheres. This issue is dealt with on both the societal as well as the individual level and has very different repercussions and perhaps very different motivating factors at each level. One of the crucial factors that underline the repercussions of non-service is that exclusion—either by choice or from being excluded for various reasons—leads to increased poverty.

> One side effect is economic. Because deferment is conditional on the recipient devoting himself to full-time study, Haredi youngsters cannot openly join the national workforce. This situation deprives the economy of a potential pool of productivity -- and increases Haredi dependence on charity and social security welfare. More important still are the wider social repercussions. Over the years, Haredi and secular groups have clashed, sometimes violently, on a wide range of issues that both communities consider to be cultural markers...instead of helping to alleviate tension thus generated, conscription (more precisely, the non-application of conscription to Haredim) very much aggravates discord. (Cohen 2008, p. 131)

Because of the way in which national service is intrinsically tied to economic opportunity, the system, therefore, precludes a choice by the individual in many cases.

The social framework in which one either does or does not participate in national service has been strengthened through time by strict guidelines within the ultra-Orthodox community and repercussions from secular society on the outside. This essentially strengthens the threat of assimilation through military service on a community level and makes it difficult or impossible for individuals to overcome this even if they wanted to.

Yocheved Saks observes that preventing various individuals from participating in society simply creates a black market for labor and so on because of the consequences that would otherwise be faced. She makes the point that the values and the fundamental workings of society have to be in concert in order to achieve a balance that benefits all members of society, not simply the select few.

> *(Sigh). There's—look, all that does is drive Haredi society underground. All it does is create a cash society. Here we go back to Torah again. In David Hamelech's army, you couldn't—you couldn't fight in David Hamelech's army if you talked after Baruch She'amar. You know, we're talking about respect for Torah law. If the army had respect for Torah law, and if it could be proven that people weren't degraded because of being Haredi or asked to do things that they should never ever have been asked to do because they were Haredi, this never would have happened.* (Interview with Yocheved Saks, 2011)

This state of affairs can also be seen as a further preservation of the status quo where in the past, the ultra-Orthodox community maintained a strict and distinct separation from secular society, and secular society, for various reasons, did not necessarily enforce its will on the ultra-Orthodox community. This creates a duality in which the status quo is preserved, and the issue of service or non-service is played out at a higher level than the individual.

> The commitment of the ultra-Orthodox to the yeshiva, on the one hand, and the possibility that if they're not in the yeshiva they will be drafted into the army, on the other, also has economic consequences. The ultra-Orthodox have a low participation rate in the work force...and are the poorest sector in Israeli society after the Arabs, with large families relying on State support. Consequently, questions of welfare and child support are at the heart of the religious party's agenda. The other, no less important, component to the agenda is the struggle to preserve the status quo against the challenges that are rapidly eroding it. (Ben-Porat 2008, pp. 32–33)

Yet, despite the fact that participation in national service has in the past been seen as merely symbolic, and, ultimately, the numbers did not matter one way or another, a new reality is beginning to form in the minds of secular society. Due to the increased poverty of the ultra-Orthodox sector resulting from non-integration in the workforce as well as an inevitable demographic shift as population numbers increase at a far greater rate among the ultra-Orthodox community, new importance will be placed on national service. By necessity, this discussion has changed the military and the way it views the ultra-Orthodox community as well as creating the potential for significant social change.

Service in the IDF has been seen as an important social marker, which at its core, creates a common and shared experience for the majority of Israelis. "A young man…at the Mir Yeshiva told a reporter that probably half of his cohort would like to be recruited, but 'they are afraid about what people will say about them, they are afraid that such a step may hamper their chances for a good marriage'" (Stadler & Ben-Ari, 2003, p. 43). Should there be increased numbers of the ultra-Orthodox community serving in the military in whatever

form they choose, this will perhaps have a great impact on the social mobility the ultra-Orthodox community currently lacks.

> Thanks to the "baby boom" experienced in Israel after the end of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and to a large extent of recent immigration from the former USSR and Ethiopia, the high incidence of non-enlistment by the ultra-Orthodox community does not seriously affect Israel's military potential. Its primary importance is symbolic; by choosing not to participate in such large numbers in what is still generally regarded as the most significant of all national obligations, members of the Haredi community have reinforced the marginal status that their particular codes of dress and manners in any case make likely. More seriously still, their non-service has also helped to stimulate societal contention. At a time when most Israeli youngsters are still required to devote two or three years of their lives to conscript service, and they obey summonses to reserve duty for some two decades thereafter, the sight of so many Haredim who recognize no such obligation generates a resentment and friction. Thus, instead of being a shared experience that might perform a bridging function between the religious and secular segments of the population, conscription has become an issue that intensifies their discord. (Cohen, 1999, p. 396)

This issue, generally, is an ongoing point of contention between secular and religious Israelis and has been extremely contentious in the past. By reaching a new understanding, these disagreements could be mitigated, and this particular issue could be a starting point for a new discussion regarding state and religion in the Israeli context.

There have been previous attempts to include the ultra-Orthodox community in national service, but due to various reasons such as internal and external pressures within the ultra-Orthodox community as well as the perception by the secular society towards the importance of creating an all-inclusive structure, these attempts were not necessarily successful.

> For a short period between 1956 and 1960 some Haredim undertook military service in units meant for Haredi boys who did not see themselves as scholars and who thought they could make a life for themselves in a "religious" unit of the army (*Nahal*). However, as the society of scholars became the norm in the Haredi world those who chose this option were viewed as losers, men who could not succeed in the *yeshiva*. (Stadler & Ben-Ari, 2003, p.18).

There are many social barriers to integration in general, and in specific, the individual needs to have more options both within his community as well as within society at large. This may not necessarily include the individual serving in some form of national service rather than non-service. Change of societal attitudes is required to find the best equilibrium between learning and national service and not necessarily relying on the propaganda of one extreme or the other. It is only through these measures that societal attitudes will begin to shift, and new forms of participation in the state will become apparent.

5. The Tal Law

As integration of the ultra-Orthodox into the IDF as well as society at large has been a lingering issue, "the Supreme Court charged the government to craft…legislation which would clarify the military status of the ultra-Orthodox" (Efron, 2003, p. 64).

> On August 23rd, 1999, then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak appointed a 10 person commission headed by Retired Justice Zvi Tal as well as six religious members to propose legislation on the issue of yeshiva draft deferments…According to the Commission's proposed law, deferments for yeshiva students would continue with no limit on their numbers....However, the proposal introduced a new concept —a so called decision year...giving yeshiva students reaching the age of 23 a free year in which they may pursue work or further study vocational training without being subject to the military draft. (Maizie, 2006, p. 190)

Once the year of decision ends, the individual has several options: He may return to yeshiva and continue to enjoy deferments from IDF service; he may enlist for a shortened, four-month period of service, or he may commit to one year of civil national service within the Haredi community (Maizie, 2006, p. 190). Choosing another path is a de facto recognition that one is no longer a full time learner in yeshiva. This arrangement, where the student is classified as

> "His Torah is his profession"...declares that Torah study is his professional activity, receives deferral from military service in order to study at his chosen *yeshiva*. Form 7302, Clause 3, states: "I hereby declare that 'the Torah is my profession,' and that I am currently not working, nor am I engaged in work or employment of any kind, paid or unpaid." (Drory, 2009, p. 164)

The Tal Commission law

> begins by noting that the system of deferrals was "as old as the state of Israel itself." It began with an edict issued during the War of Independence, on March 3rd, 1948, saying that "a decision has been reached that yeshiva students...are exempt from military service." In 1949, David Ben-Gurion…extended the exemption. It was not until 1951 that he formalized this policy. (Efron, 2003, p. 64)

Thus the Tal Law framework, a legislated change to the system of military service was established, and in "2002, the Israel parliament (Knesset) approved a five-year deferment law for yeshiva students based on recommendations of [the] committed headed by Justice Zvi Tal" (Fleischer & Gal, 2007, p. 63). The law was extended for another five years in 2007 (Cohen, 2008, p. 132). It is important to note that the number of yeshiva students has multiplied extensively since the time the exemption was first enacted. "The *yeshiva* world has grown, from an estimated 35,000 during the 1980s to more than 72,000 at present" (Stadler et al., 2008, p. 222).

> The Tal Committee worked long and diligently, [although] it failed to find a panacea....After acrimonious debate, the "Service Deferral Law" incorporating this proposal was passed in July 2002. Fifty-one Knesset members voted in favor, 41 opposed, five abstained and 22 absented themselves from the chamber. With far less fanfare, the law was extended for another five years in 2007 when the voting was 56 to nine. (Cohen, 2008, p. 132)

It should be noted, however, that "even the chairman of the commission…Tzvi Tal prudently announced that he too was dissatisfied with the commission's findings, but he insisted they represented the best possible beginning of a solution to a problem that had festered for over 50 years" (Efron, 2003, pp. 63–64). Under the law, students are able to defer their military service for several years, meaning that at age 18, after having studied in a preparatory or senior level yeshiva, they can make a decision about working versus continuing their religious studies.

The Tal Law was primarily aimed at ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students, while "Orthodox Zionists...felt that the Tal Commission had endorsed the mistaken notion that army service somehow conflicts with religion" (Efron, 2003, p. 70). Yeshiva students, once they became of age for military service, could then choose whether to join the army for their

mandated conscription or to continue to learn in yeshiva. Studies would generally continue in an upper level program referred to as *Beis Midrash* or *Kollel*. The Tal law enables yeshiva students to stay in yeshiva and to "choose after a year of work at age twenty-three, whether to continue their yeshiva studies, to enlist in the army, or to serve one year in a civic-service program" (Fleischer & Gal, 2007, p. 63). Most Haredi authorities saw these recommendations as threatening the community's very existence (Stadler et al., 2008, p. 222).

It is important to note that it is illegal to work under the yeshiva exemption status for the army. While army service is deferred, students must remain in yeshiva until they become ineligible by age or through having many children, or they are forced to de facto serve in the army. Therefore, the Tal Law gives yeshiva students the option to join military service for usually a shortened period or stay in yeshiva until they are ineligible for military service, which is approximately 26 to 30 years old. As an answer to this, *Nahal Haredi*, or *Netzach Yehuda*, was formed to allow soldiers to complete their military service in a battalion that includes combat units, support and logistics, command and control, and many other ancillary positions. This move has had real results, "[b]y establishing and maintaining [Nachal Haredi]...the IDF signals that it is a 'People's Army' that is, that including of Haredi soldiers expresses the fact that it encompasses all major groups in Israeli society while taking into account their special needs" (Stadler et al., 2008, pp. 222–223).

In this unit, a soldier is able to acquire practical, real-world job skills as a driver or soldier or many positions in-between. It is important to note that these ultra-Orthodox units differ from regular military structures in that on the base, under normal circumstances, there are no women present, either enlisted soldiers or officers; the food in these divisions, unlike the regular rigorous standard maintained by the Military Rabbinate on all army bases in the IDF, is only *Mehadrin* (or kosher food with an extra-strict level of kosher supervision); and they adhere to a much higher level of religious observance. This includes mandatory prayer times and many functions as a unit for observance. In the military, in general, soldiers have more flexibility to select from the various religious options available to them; however, in these units, religion is integrated into the functioning of the unit.

There is also the threat of exclusion and alienation from the ultra-Orthodox community for individuals participating in service in the military. Initially, when people would join the army, it would be much more difficult for them upon the completion of their

military service to return to ultra-Orthodox society; they would find it much more difficult to find a spouse as society would exclude them on the basis of their seeming secularization in the army. However, as time goes on, this route becomes more acceptable to society at large, and members will be encouraged to participate in the armed forces as a practical financial decision, which will provide a valuable entrée into society at large.

In religious units, individuals generally start when they are older as they have to come to the decision to serve in the army, which usually happens after they have to choose between leaving yeshiva and working. To facilitate them working or pursuing any type of secular higher education, they have first to serve in the army; therefore, the majority of individuals in this situation are already older and married with a more developed family, and they are more self-confident in the approach they are taking in terms of the army without the religious element of military service that religious Zionist soldiers have.

The Tal Law expired in 2012. The legal situation around a similar arrangement is being addressed by the Knesset in various ways. Ongoing evaluation and analysis will contribute to the direction a new legal framework will take and will determine if the program has been a success and whether the program should continue. It is possible that a new legal framework is needed to address military, societal, and socioeconomic issues in a more comprehensive way. Numerous other frameworks could serve the same purpose of integration and perhaps address the original intention of the law in comparison to some of the shortcomings of the Tal Law.

6. Nachal Haredi (Netzach Yehuda)

In the religious Netzach Yehuda unit, originally known as Nachal Haredi, many soldiers coming from ultra-Orthodox backgrounds do not see a correlation between the holiness and sanctity of the land of Israel and their role in the IDF. Many of these soldiers join the IDF for socioeconomic reasons and to integrate further into Israeli society. They are not doing so for religious reasons in the same way that Religious Zionist soldiers see their mission to participate in the modern state of Israel. Indeed, many ultra-Orthodox groups see the current state of Israel as the antithesis of the historical Jewish state and believe that it is not until the Messiah returns that the state has any legitimacy. While the original members of these types of units were exclusively the outcasts of the ultra-Orthodox community, the

program has begun to gain traction within the ultra-Orthodox community itself. It has become a more acceptable way to enable both soldiers and families to survive in harder economic times, as it presents "an option for Haredi youth that would increase their opportunities to enter the labor market and ameliorate the rampart poverty among Israel's ultra-Orthodox Jews" (Maizie, 2006, p. 190). Military service is then viewed as a tacit acceptance of state authority; instead of service for idealistic reasons, it becomes an avenue for short-term financial gain and long-term options.

Miriam Jacoby discusses the fact that individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community are able to serve in their own units in the military and are able to maintain the religious character of their community; serving in the military does not necessarily mean that one is forced to assimilate. Therefore, she points out that even though this is not a perfect situation, it is still possible to maintain a balance between the military and ultra-Orthodox life without necessarily giving up one or the other.

> *I think they are a good idea. Like, we want these people incorporated—the only way to incorporate a group into society in Israel is through the army or sherut leumi, National Service, so I think they are a great idea. Haredi units in the army are terrific. It's getting these people to serve, at the same time giving them what they need. ... If they don't want to be assimilated, they are not going to assimilate. I learned this in college. If you don't want to assimilate, you don't have to assimilate... Right, but at the same time they [ultra-Orthodox soldiers serving in religious units] still have to—no matter how separate they are, they are still going to be fighting, they are still going to be learning, they are still going to be having tfassim [forms], and they are going to be— they're doing something. It's a little bit. It's not 100%, but it's a little bit.* (Interview with Miriam Jacoby, 2011)

In terms of finances, soldiers, especially those who are in their mid-20s, now see the army as a way to survive economically. The average soldier enlisted in the army at large receives approximately 300 to 700 NIS (New Israeli Shekels) per month. In comparison, a religious soldier with one to two children, who serves in a non-combat position and travels home on a daily basis, receives vastly increased pay of approximately 3,000 to 4,000 NIS per month, based on the benefits available to soldiers from difficult socioeconomic backgrounds living with children and a willingness to volunteer in the IDF (Rubin, 2012, p. 177). In many cases, this salary is higher than what the person could make either learning in a communally supported yeshiva or working at a job, as many ultra-Orthodox yeshivas do not train their students in any practical or applicable job skill for the larger secular Israeli society.

> Because most Haredi men get no more than basic education in math and science, even those who want to work can't get jobs in the technology industry. Those who do serve in the army

> don't qualify for the high-tech units that produce entrepreneurs. One attempt to address this is an army program called “Wisdom in Khaki” that offers haredi men training in computers and communications work. These men apply these newly acquired skills in the intelligence branch of the army. When they finish their service they are equipped to find high-tech jobs. (Ackerman & Odenheimer 2010, p. 17)

Netzach Yehudah [“Eternal Judah”] is “an almost totally segregated [battalion] formation” (Cohen, 2008, p.133). Segregation is in the form of gender separation, as well as external influences secular soldiers are exposed to, encompassing a wide range of prohibited activities, from entertainment options to unit vacation venues.

> Nahal Haredi began in 1999 and was sanctioned by leading rabbinical figures of the Haredi world, some of whom regarded the unit as a potentially convenient dumping-ground for young Haredi men [who lacked an] attitude for intensive studies….[Nevertheless], Haredi negotiators…drove a hard bargain, placing a ceiling on the number of Haredi youths who could be drafted, and insisting that they serve in an environment completely of their own….They demanded guarantees that the young men…would be sequestered from contact with females…[allowed] regular contact with their rabbis and granted all the freedoms required [to observe] Jewish Orthodox rituals in accordance with the stringent Haredi requirements (Cohen 2008, pp. 132–133)

Netzach Yehuda

> is a combat unit numbering a few hundred men, based on an exhaustive course of training, and assigned active operational duties. Yet because it is specifically designated as Haredi it enjoys special conditions designed to serve the religious needs of soldiers such as special time periods for prayer and Talmud study. Moreover, not only is the command structure in religious hands (modern-Orthodox individuals are commanders), but teachers and religious “supervisors” are brought in from outside to oversee ongoing observance and indoctrination (Stadler et al., 2008, p. 222)

Netzach Yehuda soldiers are expected to perform at least two years of combat service, after which they can spend the year learning a trade or studying for matriculation exams (Perko, 2002, p. 101-119).

Most recruits serve in communication and computer-oriented positions. They come from all over the country and from most of the ultra-Orthodox groups—Gur Hassidim, Litvacks, Sanz Hassidim, and Sephardim. There is also a significant increase in recruits coming from more extreme communities such as Beitar Illit and Modi'in Illit. "'The program Bina in Green is tailored to fit the needs of the Haredi recruits…[It offers] a gender-oriented environment with no women, mehadrin kosher food, afternoon prayer time, and [for some soldiers, leave]...on a daily basis" (Shoychat, 2010, p. 7). The special accommodations made for ultra-Orthodox soldiers have made serving in a religious unit a more palatable option for some in the ultra-Orthodox community.

The Netzach Yehuda unit celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2009 with a celebration at Hebrew University Mount Scopus Campus. Current and former soldiers of the battalion attended, as did Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilna'i. A common theme sounded by the speakers was the skepticism with which the project was initially greeted compared to the tremendous progress it has made in 10 short years. More than 2,500 soldiers have passed through the Nahal Haredi program and the sight of bearded men with payot in uniform is no longer the shocking sight it once was in insular Haredi enclaves.

Yehuda Aronson makes it seem that the secular government is trying to be accommodating on the surface, yet this might not necessarily be the case. He notes that individuals who are not suited for the highest echelons of Jewish learning need to have other functions in society. Essentially, participation in national service becomes a resulting function of the ability of an individual to sit and learn in yeshiva. Aronson points to the importance of where the value is instilled—through the military or national framework—and it is important to recognize that foreign values are imposed by secular society in the context of military service. According to Aronson, this acknowledges that instead of including ultra-Orthodox cultural and religious values, particular secular values are being presented to soldiers, and this comes down to a fundamental question of power and religion. In essence, he speaks to the hegemony and power of the government to set the agenda towards the members of the ultra-Orthodox society as it pertains fundamentally to their way of life. This, therefore, presents a cause for alarm for individuals who seek to stay within their small social circle and maintain their traditional religious lifestyle.

> *Outwardly, it seems that they're trying to be more accommodating. That may not actually be true. It may be a cover-up for something else that's going on, which probably is true. On the*

> *other hand, the—a certain amount of it for certain types of people—it's a good thing. People who are not just cut out to just learn all day—it would be good to have—you know, get them integrated, get a job or whatever, and if they don't have army service or whatever they—they'll be in trouble. They'll be on the streets. That's the at risk youth movement—it has a good side to it as well. But again, the way it's being run, and by whom it's being run—that may not be the ideal, but it's—a lot of it comes down to the—it boils down—it's not the issue that they're arguing up here. It's that— this issue, we could live with. It's what's right behind that. ... if right now we allow the government to dictate like, you know, where the boys are going to go, they're going to step into the schools and they're going to start stepping into—to dictate everything, and that's a problem. And we don't want them—the secular government to dictate our way of life. We have our rabbanim to dictate how—what direction we're supposed to take in life.* (Interview with Yehuda Aronson, 2011)

According to the founder of the program, the success of Nahal Haredi gave the IDF the confidence to create frameworks for Haredi servicemen in other branches of the military. The Air Force, for example, has opened a program called Blue Dawn, which trains Haredi men as airplane mechanics and technicians. "'The Nahal Haredi today is setting an example both in spirit and in the military expertise to all the battalions in the Israel Defense Forces,' said Rabbi Tzvi Klebanow, director of the Netzah Yehuda nonprofit organization, which provides some financial support to the battalion" (Sokol, 2011). Despite the successes of the program, cultural acceptance is still a major barrier to wide spread acceptance of national service in the Haredi community.

7. Alternatives to military service

The government has created various alternatives to military service and allows ultra-Orthodox individuals to compromise and fulfill their obligation to national service in many different ways. For many in the ultra-Orthodox community, military service above and beyond the special units discussed elsewhere presents an alien way of life simply incompatible with ultra-Orthodox values. Through various alternative frameworks, both within and outside of the military, some accommodation is taking place allowing for greater integration and social cohesion. Nevertheless, although the reasons behind these programs are sound—to end the welfare trap created by social pressures to remain in learning indefinitely and allow an individual options—these frameworks run counter to the intention of Israel's founding principles (see Kanaaneh, 2009, pp. 31–34; Shafir and Peled, 2002, pp.143–145).

Menashe Blum maintains it is of great importance for there to be increasing communication between the ultra-Orthodox community and the rest of society. This conversation, he mentions, must be in the context of reaffirming the importance of religious priorities within society.

> *Ultra-Orthodox Jews believe that the ultimate goal of life is sitting and learning Torah. And they believe that the soldiers are protected, and Israel is protected, by them learning Torah. And if the other side can't see that, and they don't understand that, then they're never going to — they can't understand why those people are in yeshiva and not in the army. ... And from the haredi point of view, they say, I don't have to sit — I don't need an army. All I have to do is say Tehillim and HaKadosh Baruch Hu will protect me. So what do I need the army for? So therefore why should I go in the army? The two sides can't see the other side, they just don't understand it.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

David Ben-Gurion, upon the establishment of the state, had a vision of the IDF as Israel's sole defence organization and would not consider the establishment of ultra-Orthodox or Orthodox units. This is due to the fractured nature of the initial Israeli defence forces, which were an amalgam of various groups fighting against the British Mandate for independence. It was feared that creating socialized groups would be opening the door to maintaining old allegiances to pre-IDF forces and would create an inevitable rift within the military. Over time, various ultra-Orthodox units have existed, although these individuals have not had complete support of the entire ultra-Orthodox community.

Menashe Blum also talks about an escape mechanism community that would allow for a transition into the ultra-Orthodox community. He discusses a way that creates a productive and realistic approach to specialization where the entire society does not necessarily follow one particular path but has multiple options in order to achieve a greater degree of economic success for those who are not necessarily interested in staying in yeshiva. In essence, this perspective looks at changing the status quo and making it more along the lines of what is observed in a Diaspora.

> *I think it's a very good thing. I think, I mean, I have a son who went through Nahal Haredi and it's a very good thing. I don't think everybody that's in yeshiva wants to be in yeshiva. They can't leave yeshiva, they can't get jobs because they haven't done the army. But this gives them an option of going into the army in a very very closed type of environment which does not affect their Yiddishkeit and enables them to do something productive with their lives. Not meaning the Torah is not productive, but they can't do that, they don't want to do that, and this gives them an option, another option, and I think options are good.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

Alternative frameworks allow individuals to serve within their own communities at non-military positions ranging from police services to park rangers, ambulance attendants, school tutors, and so on. They have approximately the same type of pay scale as the military with shortened service, allowing individuals to fulfill their obligation of national service and present more options in terms of societal integration. An individual following civilian service or national service would be able to legally seek employment in the job market and would no longer be a prisoner of the system, which forces men to remain in the yeshiva for several decades until they're able to pursue other options.

Yoav Daniel talks about the way in which military service or alternate programs are a form of secular hegemony over the ultra-Orthodox community. He maintains that the very structure of the programs is being done for the wrong reasons. Rather than trying to be inclusive and provide options, the military is trying to mold the ultra-Orthodox community, instead of taking the unique approaches the ultra-Orthodox community has to offer and integrating them within the secular society.

> *I think it's legitimate, but I know that there is an underlying—I think that some of the people who are behind it, they have ulterior motives. They want to create a revolution and instead of recognizing that these kind of frameworks are appropriate for a certain segment of young men, it's not—that it shouldn't be imposed on everyone, that they have no business coming along and changing a whole society's worldview.* (Interview with Yoav Daniel, 2011)

Various alternatives to military service are being proposed for ultra-Orthodox individuals in order to exempt them from their requirement for military service and integrate them into the job force. While, in the past decade, numerous programs have been created to accomplish this, notably Nahal Haredi in the army and a helicopter technician/mechanic course in the air force, these programs do not reach far enough into the ultra-Orthodox community. Therefore, they do not have the impact necessary to reach an ever-growing ultra-Orthodox population of military age, unable, or unwilling, to serve in the military. A number of these new programs will be examined in the context of their integrative and potential benefit to the ultra-Orthodox population.

a. National Service

A new service paradigm has been created as an alternative to military service called National Service. National Service, or in Hebrew, *Sherut Leumi*, has primarily been a

program for Religious Zionist women who choose not to serve in the military but wish to contribute to the state. It offers alternative placements in various civilian settings such as hospitals, educational institutions, park service, et cetera. After considerable debate, this program has recently expanded to two new target populations: Israeli Arabs and the ultra-Orthodox.

Yonatan Smith underlines the importance of contributions to society and the importance of providing alternate service options for the ultra-Orthodox community. National service takes many forms, and there is a great degree of flexibility in terms of finding an option that balances the needs of the community and the demands of the state.

> *Well, I think that everybody should provide some kind of service to the society as a whole. I think that's a wonderful idea and I think that people that are not, for religious reasons, able to serve in the military should provide an alternate kind of service. Now before we talked about gemach to be in some way a— to incorporate the ability to give of oneself and to give to society as a whole and view that as gemilut chasadim for the general population.* (Interview with Yonatan Smith, 2011)

National Service for ultra-Orthodox individuals means that one is able to serve in his or her local community, contributing on a local basis where that individual can see real change and integrate into society. Through the National Service Program, participants are paid the same type of wages and benefits as one who serves in the military and upon completion of the program, are able to receive similar benefits to a noncombat soldier, such as tuition reimbursements or an allotted sum of money that can be used for various purposes such as starting a business or education, and the ability to fully integrate into society.

> Army duty, or alternatively National Service, is a prerequisite for young Haredi men seeking to join the workforce -- which has been a growing phenomenon in light of the global economic downturn that has diminished financial support from abroad. While legal limitations on employment might be removed at the end of a civilian service stint, a young Haredi man who has dedicated most of his life to Torah study will not necessarily have sufficient tools or training to start a career without the new [job training and alternative military service] initiative. (Mandel, 2011)

The response to the National Service Project for ultra-Orthodox men has been considerable, with the program being completely full, albeit with limited numbers, as the project expands. Presenting alternatives to military service, such as National Service, allows

those who do not wish to remain under the status of learning in yeshiva, until they are otherwise exempted from the military, to participate in their local communities, receive compensation for the work that they are doing, and, most importantly, substitute the requirement for military service with participation in National Service.

Upon completion of National Service, there is a great potential for individuals to pursue other options (although this has not yet been studied as it is a fairly new program), and the barriers that military service presents to the ultra-Orthodox are no longer a factor. In this open environment, whether one chooses to return to yeshiva learning or pursue other avenues such as employment or education, the ultra-Orthodox are able to do so, and this fundamentally changes the underlying pressure dynamics of the ultra-Orthodox community regarding training and education.

b. Civilian Service

Civilian Service, or *Sherut Ezrachi*, is differentiated from National Service, Sherut Leumi, by a number of factors. While Sherut Leumi seeks to employ individuals in a variety of national, regional, or local community settings such as schools, rehabilitation hospitals, ambulance service, police service, et cetera, *Sheirut Ezrachi* seeks to place individuals in a similar setting within their own communities. This provides the opportunity for ultra-Orthodox individuals to continue to learn in yeshiva, yet for part of the day, to be able to volunteer in a local grade school to tutor, for example. This new program (Lee-St. John, 2007, p. 56) provides the opportunity for ultra-Orthodox individuals who do not wish to leave their enclaves of study and religious environments to remain within their communities and not be exposed to the outside world.

Leah Halpern notes that while the programs geared towards the ultra-Orthodox community may, in fact, be engineered to preserve particular traditions and a way of life, they do not exactly meet those needs because, after all, they are part of the military. It is important to note that she says there is not a conflict between religious values and military service; therefore, the permissibility of military service is possible.

> *I think that if it's—I mean, I don't know what the practical—I've spoken to people about this and—and, what I hear is that, they say that they're geared towards Haredim, but they're not really. So I don't know. If that's true, then obviously they have to work harder, but I think theoretically it could work. I think that if, if they take into consideration whatever your religious needs are and—not only take into consideration, but respect it, then, yeah, then why*

> *shouldn't it work? It's not—it's not in conflict with the Torah, I don't think.* (Interview with Leah Halpern, 2011)

While this program does not represent the integrative advances National Service does, it still gives individuals the option to take advantage of various educational and financial opportunities once they complete the program. While in the program, much like military service, the individual receives a stipend for his volunteer work. In the case of many ultra-Orthodox individuals—who have a difficult financial situation, or a large number of children, or many other socioeconomic factors—this support can be quite substantial and could allay the expenditures of other governmental departments such as National Insurance (*Bituach Leumi*) that might otherwise have to fund yeshiva learning.

> There are currently 1,582 Haredim taking part in civilian service, in fields of welfare, public security, public health, immigration absorption, and environmental protection, according to data provided by the Civilian and National Service Authority (Mandel, 2011)

The advantage of this program is that the individual can more or less maintain his or her lifestyle, particularly under the aegis of the Tal Law, while becoming exempt from military service and earning money. There are numerous advantages to this system as a way of contributing to the resources within the ultra-Orthodox community and essentially helping fund many institutions' lack of teachers and tutors due to a loss of funding. Through this promotion of communal services, the government is essentially able to promote options within the community that can ultimately lead to a dramatic shift: No longer encumbered by the restrictions of military service, one would be able to turn towards various economic opportunities or pursue higher education to that end.

Chapter 4
Political and Social Consequences of Exclusion

This chapter examines the political and social consequences of the various institutions and actors that have built and perpetuated a system of social and religious norms, which essentially seeks to preserve the status quo rather than strive towards a comprehensive settlement or agreement. Chapter 3 focused on the various ways in which the ultra-Orthodox community is included or excluded from the larger issues in mainly secular Israeli society while at the same time retaining some political power and control over various bureaucratic aspects of religion and elements of self-determination. There are many consequences to the current structure of the social system. Through disproportionate voting power and with deep-seated incompatibility of values and perspectives, neither side can readily reach a mutually beneficial agreement. Elements of an ongoing process of separate communities within Israeli society, moving apart into distinct units, require a new paradigm.

It is important that contentious social elements are addressed in a way that fosters future growth and creates the potential for a more inclusive society. This must include input and respect and value the contributions of the various communities. As a whole, this type of cooperation would represent compromise and be an essential element of a larger and more integrated society. This is examined in a number of ways from various issues facing the ultra-Orthodox community, including education and national service, to factors such as gender equality and new emerging social paradigms that seek to change the fundamental patterns of life not only in the ultra-Orthodox community but also in the larger secular society.

An example of gender and social divisions can be seen in the following interview with Yocheved Saks. She makes an interesting point that professional education is integral for gaining equality. This particular question about the divide between Ashkenazi and Sephardi segments of society can be extrapolated to a wider-ranging study of the ability of the ultra-Orthodox community to gain a larger role in society through professional education. It is interesting that Saks uses the idea of gender equality as an example for gaining parity and looks at both racial and religious factors through this paradigm.

> *I think slowly but surely Sephardi Jews are getting more professional education, and certainly they are brilliant. Their Torah is like nothing—I remember listening to the Porat Yosef Torah even when I was here in '70-'71. Did you ever hear of Porat Yosef Torah? It*

> *could cross your eyes, it's incredible. They are—they're brilliant Torah scholars, brilliant. No, I think that because they are slowly but surely entering the professions, that... Don't forget that there is a certain—at least from what I observe, there is a certain condescension of men towards women in Sephardi societies that is not as palpable in Ashkenazi societies. So, you know, that has to wash through the families. Here we go back down to the microcosm again; that you know, women have to feel themselves equal. You have somebody like Adina Bar Shalom—you know who this is? She's Rabbi Ovadia Yosef's daughter. She's the—as it were, the chancellor of the—I think they call it Hamachon HaCharedi. They're training all kinds of professionals there.*
> (Interview with Yocheved Saks, 2011)

Deciding what the state is to whom is no easy task. Indeed,

> the majority of ultra-Orthodox do not recognize Israel as the Jewish state that the Bible says will lead its people to redemption. According to them, the Jewish people are "apart from history," under divine protection, and a secular national movement like Zionism will not be the harbinger of deliverance. (Pedahzur et al., 2000, p. 22)

Bridging this gap to create a more inclusive progressive society is the key to the advancement of Israeli society as a whole. Whether it is the old or new vision of the state, accommodation can be made without resolving the issue of the intrinsic religious character of the state in a manner that serves both the interests of the state and its component communities.

A. Social and Economic Issues

1. Halacha, the driving force behind the UO community

The ultra-Orthodox community operates by repeating various cultural, societal, and religious forms of observance. This is done through an ongoing process of textual interpretation and reinterpretation where the pattern of life from the largest issues of life and death and the direction of the community to the smallest issues governing dress, food, customs, interactions, and so on are based on textual interpretation. This happens in different ways depending on the particular structure of the sect or group in question, but on the whole, textual interpretation and reinterpretation are key facets to life in the ultra-Orthodox community. Issues of some significance and mundane everyday issues may have different customs or interpretations in Jewish law, and groups with different ancestry, customs, or origin may have slightly different customs as textually interpreted through their various

rabbinic authority figures. While generally, the hierarchy of rabbinic authority is somewhat decentralized, again depending on which particular group is being examined, the power to shape society and meet new challenges stems directly from the interpretation and examination of various textual references, both ancient and modern. This process does not yield the same results uniformly. There are often disagreements among authorities and diverging opinions on leniencies and stringencies or perhaps even the meaning and attention of a particular custom or law and how it is to be interpreted and applied.

Yocheved Saks makes an important point that despite outward appearance, the ultra-Orthodox community is not governed by monolithic rules standardized across all parts of the community. Rather, each individual follows his or her particular rabbi. Overall, a pattern of leadership emerges across the entire community, which is both intricate in its complexity and at the same time, extremely nuanced and detailed. There can be many different opinions regarding not only the letter of the law, which in many cases is not widely up for interpretation, but also the spirit of the law—the way in which individuals live every aspect of their lives.

> *Here we go again. You see, these are questions that more or less my clients have asked me at various times. I always say that the difference between—let's say between Catholicism, Judaism, is that Judaism is not run by dogma. Judaism is run by—Judaism is a custom-religion. It's custom-designed to fit every Jew. And because it's custom-defined to fit every Jew, that's why every Jew, if they're smart, will find themselves a rabbi, and aseh l'cha rav is essential. You have to have someone who can guide you. And if you don't have that, you go nowhere. How do I define Halacha? And I can tell you a lot of funny stories about people, you know—it just happened last night where someone had to ask a very unusual kind of question. And this question—if he had asked this question to any other rabbi, the rabbi would have probably totally freaked out because it was a really unusual question pertaining to marriage et cetera. And this person was perceptive enough to know that he better not ask anybody else and he better ask my husband (laughs)— when I heard my husband answer the question, I said to myself—I said to him, oh, good for so-and-so; he knew to ask this only to […identifying information removed…]. (Laughs).* (Interview with Yocheved Saks, 2011)

> The product of this system is a master of sacred text whose reference group is composed of other masters of Jewish text. It is the praise of his peers which the halakhic authority most avidly seeks, their opprobrium which he most assiduously avoids. As a result, those with the authority to innovate or at least legitimate new modes of thought, new outlooks, new attitudes within Orthodoxy are least likely to do so. (Liebman, 1998, p. 405)

This source of authority could be used in a socially progressive manner yielding positive change, however that is interpreted, or conversely, this type of control could be used to maintain or strengthen the status quo. Regardless of the direction the interpretation of Jewish law takes, the overriding commonality is the ubiquitous nature of Jewish law in the patterns of life within the ultra-Orthodox community. This has far-reaching effects outside the ultra-Orthodox community as well, ranging from customs practiced among secular members of Israeli society to the underlying principles guiding government policy.

New and complex situations are dealt with in this manner—from the latest advancements in biotechnology to the interpretation of how various technologies should be used within the context of Jewish spiritual life. This process necessarily becomes very fluid with the ability to quickly adapt to new situations by reinterpretation of millennia of tradition and law. To fit the particular circumstance, this mechanism becomes key to adapting to the changing world surrounding ultra-Orthodox Judaism. This is particularly important as questions emerge relating to technological advancement and the resulting rapid pace of societal advancement and external influences. This is, perhaps, a modern parallel to the Enlightenment and continues to the present day. In the ultra-Orthodox community, Halacha provides the guiding principles to maintain authentic Judaism as interpreted by its users.

Halacha is at the surface, a compendium of rabbinic text interpretations and dictates spanning thousands of years, stemming from interpretations of the written and oral Torah. This includes exegeses and descriptions codifying every conceivable aspect of daily life and ritual expounded upon and discussed at length through millennia, including contemporary interpretations. Within the ultra-Orthodox community, in Israel, the textual basis of religion is not set apart from everyday practice. Rather, it is practiced and acted out with exacting accuracy. This applies to both the direction of communal and social matters as well as the personal, as “matters of Halachah, bearing on practical matters of conduct (Freudenthal, 1998, p. IX)” are seen throughout ultra-Orthodox life. It is a process that leads to reinterpretation and reinforcement in an ongoing cycle as individuals collectedly absorb, correct, re-establish, reinterpret, and continue the chain of tradition. In Judaism the present reality of Judaism is linked in an “unbroken chain” to Sinai and Moses. This is meant to be indicative of an unchanging reality.

> Haredi religious authorities, writers, publishers, and other cultural agents must defend the purity of the Haredi enclave through moral arguments about the ethical and cosmological ordering of the universe and through ever more precise and disambiguated prescriptions governing both public and private life. Alien cultural practices, commodities, and lifestyles must be assessed, resisted, selectively appropriated, or replaced with acceptable substitutes. Outsiders must be won over, neutralized, or kept at a distance. Yet all such strategic efforts invariably require defenders of the Haredi enclave to master the use of speech genres, managerial techniques, and modes of cultural activity found in the "outer world" domains of advertising, fundraising, political lobbying, secular scholarship, popular music, and fashion. (Stolow, 2010, pp. 103–104)

Halacha itself is slow to change and adapt to new circumstances in terms of social evolution and often acts to counteract assimilation and integration in foreign societies. This is not to say that Halacha is stymied by new technologies or new circumstances. Rather, Halacha is often at the forefront of biological, biomedical, and technical advances where new interpretations of centuries-old rules can lead to potential leniencies still within the confines of the strict dictates of Jewish law.

Nevertheless, it is still difficult to gain forward traction and attempt to change some of the underlying contentious issues. It can even be difficult to address potentially contentious issues using the present-day, non-hierarchical system with multiple sects and divisions (as outlined in Chapter 2) without one clear leader. This lack of centralization in the ultra-Orthodox world, and to a greater degree in the Jewish world at large, means that one's opinions may vary greatly depending on which particular rabbi that person follows and how that rabbi interprets Jewish law. That does not mean that there are no standards. On the contrary, textual references create many clear delineations of what can and cannot be interpreted and reinterpreted. In many ways, similarities in the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel outweigh the numerous distinctions when it comes to the interpretation and observances surrounding Jewish law.

Yoav Daniel discusses a lack of centralization of rabbinic authority in the Diaspora, while this lack of centralization is by no means the case in Israel. Due to the geographic proximity of ultra-Orthodox communities and the more cloistered nature of the ultra-

Orthodox community in Israel, it may be possible that rabbinic authority is concentrated to a greater degree in Israel than in the Diaspora in general.

> *(pauses) One difference is—I heard that rabbinical authority is different in America because you don't have communities that are as tight-knit. You know, you'll have people spread out across the whole country, so someone can't come in and say this is what the rabbis say; everyone has to do this. You know, things like cellphones. Even if there is a worthy cause, or maybe not such a worthy cause, you just can't get it done, which has advantages and disadvantages.* (Interview with Yoav Daniel, 2011)

2. Principled accommodationism

Orthodox Judaism as a whole has been forged and moulded during time through response to outside secularizing forces. The constant threat of assimilation has caused a shift within the religion as a reaction to secularization and, as a consequence, opposition to compromise. Yet for the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel, there is a degree of accommodation within the religion to encompass both the spiritual and the physical realms as ends to ensure the continuity and stability of Jewish Orthodoxy.

An interesting example of this is the perspective taken by Chief Rabbi of British Mandate Palestine, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, who created a symbiosis of Zionism and religion. In essence, he argued for the inherent religiosity of Israel and Religious Zionists who were building towards a dream of the ultimate redemption by settling the land of Israel. The settlers who were not religious, the secular Zionists, did not necessarily realize the reasons behind their actions, but they too were ultimately contributing to both the physical and spiritual well-being of the Zionist enterprise with all its religious overtones.

> [Principled accommodationism] was formulated by the ultra-Orthodox Rabbi A.I. Kook (1865-1935), chief Ashkenazi rabbi of [British Mandate] Palestine from 1921 until his death. According to Kook's famous "synthesis" Zionist settlement in Palestine was the "advent of redemption" *(atchalta degeula*), a preliminary but essential stage in the holy process of redemption. Secular Zionists, while indeed sinners, were unknowingly carrying out God's will in setting up physical prerequisites for the final spiritual redemption. Although final redemption required that all Jews repent and return to religion, the preparatory work done by secular Zionists was potentially and partially sacred, and so were its perpetrators. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 139)

According to Rabbi Kook, this is indicative of how a religious goal, such as the inherent spiritual dimension of settling Israel, can be met by incorporating a secular-type endeavour.

As a defence mechanism, the normal response to external pressures is continued isolation and withdrawal. This response serves to safeguard the practices, religious values, and way of life established by the community over time. This may be further characteristic of a contraction of base values and stringencies in observance to increased Orthodoxy in order to maintain what is perceived now to be the status quo. This change is, in fact, significant of a build-up over a long period of time and not only a response, rather an ongoing increase in values and social norms. Principled accommodationism does work in some respects, yet it cannot meet the long-term goals of the ultra-Orthodox community. This is particularly true when the fundamental values of the ultra-Orthodox community and the surrounding secular society stand in opposition to developed and entrenched "religious" beliefs.

B. Institutions and Change

1. Working towards common goals

An anecdote serves to illustrate this process: A recent nationwide safety campaign that targeted drivers to slow down on highways as well as to ensure that their seatbelts were fastened did not make an impact at all in self-segregated exclusively Haredi neighborhoods and towns. In these locations, access or willingness to partake in communications generally available throughout the society, such as TV, secular newspapers, Internet, and so on, did not have much of an impact. Therefore, both on a practical level, as a money-saving element, as well as the importance of the underlying message, traffic safety officials visited various rabbis and asked them to include a message of road safety in their sermons or in various dialogues that they had with members of the community and its institutions. This is fitting with this study as Durkheim stated that "[s]ociology can then be defined as the science of institutions, of their genesis and functioning…[b]y 'Institutions'...'all beliefs and all modes of conduct instituted by the collectivity'" (Thompson, 1992, p.14). Perhaps this is contextualized in the rabbi-community relationship in this example.

The overall impact of this type of influence may generally be the same as advertising in other venues among secular society, but due to the top-down organization of Haredi society, these messages may be much more potent and afford an opportunity of working

through the system rather than coming from the outside. Another example of this institutional process is the discussion of various ultra-Orthodox military units that have been created. In these units, ultra-Orthodox rabbinical leaders were not only part of the consultative process to the formation of these units but are also integral to the ongoing operation and staffing of these units with members of their own community.

C. Military

1. Military exemptions and deferments

The issue of exemptions and deferments from national service or military service by ultra-Orthodox men is a particularly difficult issue of contention between secular and religious politicians. The exemption or deferment from military service started in the pre-state period with the accommodations made for the Agudat Yisrael party and were formalized after the establishment of the state when David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, agreed to exempt Orthodox yeshiva students from recruitment in the military, which was imposed on the rest of Israeli Jewish society. This exemption was a result of political considerations and also was partially due to Ben-Gurion's sympathy for the Orthodox community emerging from the decimation of the yeshiva world after the Holocaust. Initially, therefore, 400 students were exempted in 1948 from military service and were able to study full time instead, but by the 1990s, this number had reached more than 30,000. One of the difficulties with this particular exemption was that it was never formally legislated, "rather the minister of defense uses his authority to 'postpone' the conscription of yeshiva students" (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 32).

> Shas refused to bow down to hegemonic secular militarism as the Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox parties did, instead unhesitatingly presenting the root of studying Torah as no less worthy, if not more so, than the military one. Shas thus constructed an alternative pattern of rewards for an increasingly ultra-Orthodox population in the form of a huge project of Mizrachi yeshivas. This route offered greater material and symbolic rewards than military participation, which, for such young people, had meant either "dropping out" or taking a marginal position in the blue-collar segments of the military. However, the ethno-national groups not only challenged the Ashkenazi hegemony in discourse and politically; they also increased their practical hold on the IDF. (Levy, 2008, p. 130)

More recently, the Israeli Cabinet has approved reform in recruiting the Haredi community into the Israel Defense Forces. These reforms, which have been attempted at various stages for political and social reasons, have not reached fruition, and as of summer 2012, yet another round of negotiations over this particularly thorny political issue were being carried out, specifically in relation to the Tal Law. In general, reform in recruiting members of the ultra-Orthodox community grants exemptions to all yeshiva students age 22 and above on the condition that they perform one year of national service (Mazie, 2006, p. 190). This was discussed extensively in the section in Chapter 3 dealing with the Tal Law and the Gabai committee. Numerous debates take place regarding inclusion of various programs in civic or national service as opposed to security or military service. Examples of these programs include frameworks such as the national ambulance service, community police force, the prison service, and the national parks service. A yeshiva student from age 24 to 26 who is single would be obligated to perform one year of national service in any one of these types of programs. Above age 26, yeshiva students would be obligated to perform national service with other organizations within the Haredi community. Over a set age, usually early 30s, members of the Haredi community would generally be exempt from service, creating a large disparity between the ultra-Orthodox population and that of the secular community (Horowitz & Kimmerling, 1974).

Defence Minister Ehud Barak supported the decision obligating Haredim to carry part of the national burden and participate in national service programs. He has said that these decisions will the double the number of available positions within five years and that ultra-Orthodox men will still enroll in national service or other programs (Navot, 2007, p. 74). While this is perceived as a significant revolution with hope for successful results within the various elements of the security and economic burdens the country bears, the hope among secular leadership is that this trend will be a catalyst for the integration of members of the ultra-Orthodox community within the larger Israeli society and the economy.

By the 1990s, the number of potential recruits exempted from yeshiva surpassed 10% of the total draft. This number has been growing exponentially because of the significantly higher birthrate among the ultra-Orthodox community compared to the secular community. Due to growing power in the cohesion of Haredi political parties, the exemptions have jumped exponentially from 400 in 1948 to 8,257 in 1977, which was the first year that Haredi

parties joined the government coalition and, therefore, had increased political power. These numbers continue to grow; by 1985, there were 16,000 deferrals or exemptions, 35,000 in 1999, and as of 2007, almost 50,000. This number is continually increasing, presenting secular society with a worrying demographic trend regarding the future recruitment pool for state security.

> Claiming to be the authentic guardians of Judaism's traditional values, their resistance to the draft is uncompromising. Haredi spiritual leaders insist on service exemptions for women on the grounds that military duty violates Orthodox standards of modesty. They're equally adamant that Haredi males too deserve to be excused conscription, primarily so that they might dedicate themselves to study in the sacred textual canon. (Cohen, 2008, pp. 130–131)

Women who claimed exemption from the draft were once required to have their application verified by a rabbinical board, but this is no longer the case. Instead, and largely in response to the arguments that appearing before such a tribunal infringes on the privacy of Orthodox Jewish women, "since 1981, girls applying for exemption on religious grounds have simply been required to submit a *pro forma* declaration. Presently some 20% of all potential female recruits are estimated to avail themselves to that option" (Cohen, 1999, pp. 395–396).

This creates an interesting gender/performance dichotomy in which the traditional gender roles in the ultra-Orthodox home are somewhat reversed, yet this has not led to fundamental changes in the ultra-Orthodox community. The fundamental disagreement over national service is that secular Israelis are frustrated with the way in which Haredim are exempted or defer their service. It seems unfair to secular Israelis that their children are required to perform military service. On the flip side, Haredim challenge that "if the government knew how much [Torah] students protect the State's wellbeing through their study, it would put guards in the schools making sure their learning is never interrupted" (Cohen 2008, pp. 131–132).

The system of granting exemptions and deferrals to military service is not explicitly legislated. Therefore, in a vacuum of clear direction and in many cases social appeasement, the idea has developed for adopting an official policy without legislation to attempt to minimize draft deferments. Even with the official policy in place, within the military proportionally, the potential number of draftees from within the ultra-Orthodox community is not growing. The aggregate 12.1% of the available male pool that did not enlist in 1980 grew

to 16.6% in 1990. By 2007, the overall numbers of potential draftees who were not recruited reached 25%. Haredim count for 11% of the total 25% and comprise the largest single group in the category of nonparticipation in national service (Cohen, 2008, p. 134).

> From the 1980s, various activists began to protest what they described as "discriminatory practices" and demanded the annulment of the exemption [of Jewish Israelis from military service on the basis of yeshiva learning]. In 1999 the government appointed a committee to find a practical solution to the problem after the Supreme Court ruled the exemption process inappropriate. The committee's recommendations, legislated by the Knesset (Israeli parliament), which attempted to limit the number of exemptions and encourage the Orthodox to join the army, were largely unimplemented. (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 32)

One of the issues is that due to the fact that the exemption for Torah study is not explicitly legislated, the minister of defence uses his authority to postpone the recruitment of yeshiva students from year to year. Even when secular groups have in the past demanded the cancellation of the exemption and a legislative law, which clearly states the parameters of deferral, ultra-Orthodox political parties have circumvented these appeals. This particular issue has not been brought before the courts; however, frameworks in which military service can be done through a transitional period, such as the Tal Law, have been brought to the courts and are still an issue of great contention in Israel.

> The cabinet…approved the reform in recruiting the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) community to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The reform grants exemptions to all yeshiva students aged 22 and over, on condition that they perform one year of National Service. Twenty-three ministers supported the measure, while Minister of Minorities Avishay Braverman (Labor) voted against, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intelligence and Atomic Energy Dan Meridor (Likud) and Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor Binyamin Ben-Eliezer (Labor) abstained. The reform is in fact no different from the wholesale exemption proposed by the Gabai Committee. The only change concerns the inclusion of what the cabinet calls Civic (security) Service. This is in fact 12 months of voluntary service in emergency frameworks such as Magen David Adom ambulance service, community police force, or the prison service. According to the original plan, yeshiva students up to the age of 24 who were married but without children, and up to the age of 26 if they were single, were obligated to perform one year of National Service. Above those ages yeshiva students could perform their National Service in other organizations such as Haredi non-profit organizations. But the

> reform today will require yeshiva students up to the age of 26 to undertake their National Service in emergency organizations, and only above that age will they qualify for other forms of service.
>
> Minister of Defense Ehud Barak welcomed the decision and said, "This is the right step in the right direction in allowing Haredim to be part of carrying the national burden." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: "This decision will provide for the doubling of the number of ultra-Orthodox young men enrolled in National Service. We were talking about doubling them within five years and we mean that most ultra-Orthodox young men in their draft year will serve in National Service within five years. This is a revolution, a significant revolution. It will have repercussions regarding the division of security and economic burden in the country. It will have very great consequences for the integration of the ultra-Orthodox into society and the economy." (Weissman, 2011)

Members of the ultra-Orthodox community have sought to utilize the liberal values that empower the individual standpoint as a stronger negotiating system within the framework of the legal system. In much the same way that secular artists, athletes, models, and other luminaries receive exemptions or deferrals from the military to pursue what is understood to be something more valuable to the national interest, ultra-Orthodox Israelis would like to equate their religious study as being critical elements in the national interest.

> Since the 1990s, soldiers have begun to negotiate with the army in person or via their families or other networks. These negotiations can determine the individual's role in the army, the condition under which he/she serves, restrictions on his/her service and military function, and even the very fact of his/her serving at all. The strengthening of liberal values and their partial infiltration into the modes of action among governmental institutions, have empowered the individual's standpoint, and put him/her in a stronger negotiating position, sometimes with the assistance of the legal system. The media has featured many stories of artists, athletes, and models that choose not to serve in the military as it would interfere with their careers. (Levi, 2008, p. 126)

A concurrent trend has been occurring since the 1980s in which a socio-cultural process has increased the level of individualization in Israeli society. By 1990, there was a similar decline in national-military ethos, which, in turn, weakened the motivation for individuals throughout Israeli society to serve in the military. Other states have faced similar crises of confidence in

the national order, but in Israel, this phenomenon has been termed a motivational crisis. Many potential soldiers as well as reserve soldiers, as part of these social changes, have either not participated in the draft and done initial military service or do not continue to serve in the reserve forces. Members of the ultra-Orthodox community see this as a similar trend even though in the 1990s an increased number of citizens avoided national service for reasons related to religion, mental and physical health, and passivism (Mizrahi, 2008, pp. 157–158).

Rabbi Uri Regev, the president and CEO of Hiddush - Freedom of Religion for Israel, an umbrella organization of the worldwide Progressive, Reform, Liberal, and Reconstructionist movements, maintains:

> The repercussions of a growing number of Haredim in Israel are that it is has triggered debate over the future of the preparedness of the army. Ten years ago, 7% of those subject to the draft were exempt on the basis that they were studying in yeshivas. Now that figure is almost 14%, which adds up to 65,000 exemptions. During [David] Ben-Gurion's time 60 years ago, there were only 400 exemptions. [Moreover], according to Rabbi…Regev…:
>
> An increased number of Haredim in Israel will impact the army as "Currently in Israel, 26% of first-graders study in ultra-Orthodox schools. The army is saying that if nothing changes, in 12 years we will be facing a 26% exemption rate on the basis of studying in a yeshiva...and that there would not be enough of a draft base to draw from. Even now the declining draft corps has forced the army to cut the number of permits it gives to young Israelis who want to spend a year doing community service before going to the army." (Ain, 2011)

2. Haredim and service in the military

Haredi communities have been growing rapidly and continue to do so, particularly in recent years. The number of individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community not serving in the military has expanded greatly due to the military service exemption granted to yeshiva students. Generally, military service is mandatory for all Israeli citizens. For men, this requires three years of service and for women, two years of service, starting at age 18. Various factors such as age and other considerations are taken into account when calculating the length of time for national service. For example, women who are married, pregnant, or are mothers are generally exempted from national service.

Israeli-Arab men, except for those who belong to the Druze or Circassian minorities, and all Israeli-Arab women are administratively exempt and not called up due to the inherent conflicts of interest in their service. Jewish women are also exempt if they declare military service violates their religious beliefs and are able, if they are interested, to participate in national service and alternate frameworks. However, few ultra-Orthodox women choose to take part in this option. National service or civilian service has strong ties to the national religious movement in Israel and, therefore, is not perceived as a viable alternative by ultra-Orthodox women. It is important to note that various new programs have come into effect regarding alternatives for both ultra-Orthodox men and women, yet these frameworks have not met the need of the large number of people seeking an alternative to military or national service. In addition to outright exemptions, there are also many ultra-Orthodox and some national religious yeshiva students, much like students in Druze high schools, who are granted postponements of their military service until the end of their studies and may participate in joint programs that combine academic studies with their military service. Unlike various college or university transition programs into the military, ultra-Orthodox students do not generally serve in the military even after they graduate from yeshiva and continue onto other institutions of Jewish higher learning within the community (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 143).

This relates to the fundamental question of the importance of secular education and the opportunities it presents for members of the ultra-Orthodox community. By establishing a relationship between yeshiva/high school or college/yeshiva equivalence, ultra-Orthodox individuals, much like their Religious Zionist counterparts, will be able both to gain access to academic knowledge in various fields and use this specialist knowledge as part of their national service or through national service alternate frameworks. This model would allow ultra-Orthodox individuals to integrate on an economic level, without the cultural and social compromises that the ultra-Orthodox community generally rallies against. Instead, through programs that seek accommodation to religious values and teach secular subjects, new opportunities could be found for ultra-Orthodox individuals who wish to pursue a career in the larger Israeli workforce but are unable to do so. The limited numbers of programs that have sought to fulfill the demand for these types of services have generally been successful.

However, greatly increased capacity is needed in order to meet the future demand in terms of the ongoing issues over a potential demographic crisis.

> In the 50 years between 1948 and 1998 70,000 deferments of military service, most of them *de facto* exemptions, had been granted, mostly to Haredi yeshiva students. In 1999 they were held by 30,400 people. The rate in which deferments had been granted has been accelerating rapidly in recent years: 2.5% of the male draft eligible cohort were granted deferments in 1968, 5.3% in 1988, and 9.2% or about 3,900 men in 1999….
>
> Since only full-time yeshiva students...are eligible for deferments, and since deferments become exemptions once their holder reaches the age of 41 (35 if he has four children or more), most of these students continue to study, or at least be registered in yeshivot, and do not enter the labor market for many years if at all. Thus while the average age of leaving a Haredi yeshiva in Israel is 42, in the US, where no special privileges are accrued to yeshiva students, the average leaving age [from yeshiva] is 20 [to] 25. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 143)

There may be other solutions, such as changing the way the IDF operates, such as creating an all volunteer army. This would allow for the ultra-Orthodox to join the national service or remain apart on their own terms. This idea is one of many options, but may not fully replace the long held ideal of the IDF as a national integrator.

D. Large Scale Protests

An interesting facet of the borderline between the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel and the rest of Israeli society, both religious and non-religious, can be seen in the physical and powerful displays of solidarity the ultra-Orthodox community participates in when they are protesting a particular issue. It is difficult not to notice an immense sweeping crowd of hundreds or thousands dressed in identical garb and protesting, praying, chanting, or wanting to be heard. In a society based on a religious hierarchy where the individual has very little sway and as a society that feels cut off and under-represented in the upper echelons of political power, those who consider themselves the guardians of Israeli's spiritual soul protest in order to make themselves seen and heard. Perhaps the protests themselves are part of an ongoing social message.

> The actual outcome of this controversy seems less important than the continuation of conflict that it represents. Indeed there is not likely to be an outcome of any permanence. Rather, each demand and each demonstration will serve as a stage in a continuing dispute that will erupt

> sooner or later over one or another site or issue. Each controversy is likely to feature demands by religious or secular Israelis to restore the status quo, but each side will be thinking of a different status quo. (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 168)

Many of the violent protests are only instigated by a tiny fraction of the ultra-Orthodox community, and many of the violent protests are only participated in by small groups of followers. Yet these loud voices, if unopposed, can come to represent sweeping characterizations of the entire ultra-Orthodox community. They can paint a picture of single-minded intolerance, aggression, and backwardness when a counteracting message by the majority of the community preaches tolerance, inclusion, and understanding. Large-scale protests, both peaceful and otherwise, have been a major feature of the tensions on the religious/secular social divisions both in terms of physical space and in terms of public opinion.

> Policymakers cope with the demands of religious and anti-religious activists by employing several tactics that have been less thorough or that treat the details and avoid basic conflicts. The policymakers urge moderation, engage in prolonged discussions, offer concessions, and delay rather than cancel projects. On some occasions, delay provides time for splits within the religious or secular camps to show themselves, or wears down the activist. Deliberation focuses on particular instances of conflict. Policymakers do not try to resolve general terms of principles of Shabbat, kosher food, or other general issues that lie behind specific disputes. (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 166)

It is interesting that this type of movement of making one's voice heard in large-scale public protests, normally participated in only by men, shows a lack of faith in ultra-Orthodox political leadership. These protests often reach the rhetorical dialogue of placing the secular government against the sage advice of leading rabbis, the righteousness of the Torah versus the secular evil of the Supreme Court, and so on. Social issues are often carried to this extreme because, at the edge of these controversies surrounding religion, there is very little compromise to be made. In other issues, such as the state of military service, or educational funding, or many other situations, some compromise is able to be made. In some cases, a solution may be found in which neither side actually is at an advantage, and the status quo agreement allows for separate but equitable divisions of power and funding.

The collective power of the ultra-Orthodox community cannot be underestimated. The ability of the ultra-Orthodox community to effectively work together on social protest issues and to boycott certain products or services en masse gives the community considerable clout. The overall spending power of the "ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) market is estimated to be worth about $1.5 billion a year. Its consumer power, as a form of collective action, is supposedly enhanced, first, by the 'social capital' of the community and, second, by the obedience to religious authority (Shamir & Ben-Porat 2007, p. 85).

Regarding other examples, such as travel on the Sabbath (a forbidden activity for the ultra-Orthodox community), and in this particular case, the use of city parking lots on the territorial edges of an ultra-Orthodox community, there are many disputes. Tensions have risen to a new level leading to ongoing, often violent, and sweeping protests over the use of parking lots in this peripheral outlying area of religious neighbourhoods. With an ongoing campaign to secularize bus routes (Israel Be Free, 2012) in various areas of Israel without a large Orthodox population, these initiatives are receiving very little public protest (Tabory & Shalev Levtzur, 2009, p. 263; Evans, 2011, p. 241). Rather, it is the visible, the nearby, and the present that fly in the face of traditional Orthodox values. If on these particular issues there can be no significant compromise and even more so if compromise is interpreted as "selling out" or betraying deep seated fundamental values of ultra-Orthodoxy, the only remaining option is to inform the public in an explicit way of the ultra-Orthodox community's displeasure.

> Anti-religious Jewish politicians [have] accused the ultra-Orthodox of trying to upset the status quo by demanding the Sabbath closing of major roads near [their] neighborhoods. Religious activists responded that the status quo has already been upset by the city's secular community, which kept numerous pubs, discotheques, and restaurants open seven days a week. The next stage of the controversy witnessed the playing out of a familiar ritual over the course of several Sabbaths: large gatherings of ultra-Orthodox Jews, shouts about the sanctity of the Sabbath, overturned dumpsters, stones thrown at traffic, the use of mounted police, some injuries among protestors, counter protests by the secularists, brief arrests of the protestors, statements by Teddy Kollek and police officials about the rule of law, proclamations by the Orthodox rabbis about the sanctity of the Sabbath. Finally, the police toughened their posture and reached an agreement with the rabbis to limit protests to a certain

> period. Sabbath traffic continued -- but not via the exit that led into the religious neighborhood -- and the protest died. (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 163)

During the research phases of this thesis, four particular large-scale protests took place in Israel and were both unexpected and dramatic in their scale. These are not the only protests that happened in Israel, nor are they exclusively the only issues, but these four examples offer an insight into a feeling of despair and any quality the ultra-Orthodox community feels when trying to make their views known and the religious considerations they expect from secular society.

Example 1: parking lots and Sabbath observance

An interesting protest took place and occasionally still takes place over the Jerusalem city municipal parking lot near the Old City. The parking lot was opened by the city to provide for traffic overflow of guests wishing to visit the Old City on the Sabbath, which could include non-Jews as well as secular Jews. A dangerous situation arose of visitors parking their cars along public roadways, potentially blocking traffic and potentially impeding delivery and access for emergency services. Jerusalem City Hall proposed opening for free the municipal parking lot and staffing it with non-Jewish city employees as not to offend the religious sensitivities of the ultra-Orthodox community that borders the area of City Hall and the parking lot.

With increased regularity, ongoing demonstrations were carried out in front of the parking lots on a weekly basis on the Sabbath, and as the protests grew in scale and size, the police became more involved. This has become a major area of contention and “the ultra-Orthodox have brought thousands into the streets to protest the opening of Jerusalem parking lots on the Sabbath” (Mitnick, 2010, p. 1). Additional reporters started covering these weekly protests, which often turned violent. With increasing regularity, the media carried images of ultra-Orthodox men being dragged in handcuffs into police cars following protests on the Sabbath. The parking lots themselves are not directly inside religious neighbourhoods, but they are relatively close to the common boundaries of the ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood where automobiles are generally prohibited from driving during the Sabbath. This would potentially be a significant disturbance. This issue over consideration of the ultra-Orthodox

community's values was and is felt strongly by many in the ultra-Orthodox community. As a result, even though the protests did not have a great degree of numbers, the regular repetition of these protests and the way in which the protests were carried out created public awareness of these issues and reopened another aspect of the difficulties ultra-Orthodox Israelis feel they encounter in Israeli society (Nahshoni, 2011).

Yitzchak Cohen seems to suggest a live-and-let-live policy in which borderlines between the ultra-Orthodox community and the city governments are very clearly delineated, and despite what individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community may think, both parties are not trying to encroach upon each other's territory. This opinion is, in its essence, perhaps a reflection of the Western liberalism seen among ultra-Orthodox Jews in the Diaspora transplanted into the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel.

> *Personally, my opinion is that it's a city parking lot, and things that are run by the city in areas where there are people driving anyway—which I'm assuming in those areas, if they're needing to have them open, that people would be driving there anyway, that they should allow it to be open, and that the ultra-Orthodox should not involve themselves in telling the city how they should be running city things, such as parking lots, when they're in areas where people are driving anyhow.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

In contrast, Yoav Daniel takes a very clear exception to any move that may adversely impact the hegemony the ultra-Orthodox community has over their territorial sphere of influence. By encroaching on physical territory, a new reality is being created defining the borders of the ultra-Orthodox community. In many ways, this has an ideological aspect in which secular society functions outside the boundaries as it wishes without taking heed of the ultra-Orthodox viewpoints for control over the spiritual welfare of the entire country. This is indicative of the underlying conflict that puts each side against the other and devolves into an ongoing debate over liberalism versus religion and so on.

> *Well, there's always the segment of Haredi society that anything that looks like an inroads against Sabbath is—you have to start throwing rocks. But there—sometimes the issues are more complicated. You can't—you know, closing a road—there are non-Jews who use roads too. Who are you to say—if you are going to decide which—I think everyone would agree that there are certain streets that should be closed. If you're in a very small street in the middle of a huge Haredi neighborhood, so why can't you close a street? And on the other hand, if it's a main thoroughfare and there are non-Jews using it and there are all kinds of—and it's not really disturbing you, so who are you to close it? And, in fact, even if you close it, so you're not preventing—even if you have the intentions of preventing Shabbos desecration, you're not doing that, because people are not going to all of a sudden—ah, see a roadblock, stop their cars and get out and say, where can I spend the night for Shabbos? You're just closing your eyes—putting blinders on. So the challenges, the in-between territory, which streets are*

> *legitimate to close? Which parking lots are legitimate to close?* (Interview with Yoav Daniel, 2011)

Deena Friedberg points out that while there are certainly two perspectives on this issue, each side did not necessarily define victory for its point of view in certain terms. This led to the situation becoming exacerbated by scrutiny in the media, by ongoing tensions, by continued fights with ultimately not very much being accomplished rather than seeking a new way in which to preserve, or perhaps rebalance, the status quo. Contextually, this issue seems to be another challenge to the status quo, seeking to reinforce the boundaries that exist around the ultra-Orthodox community and perhaps find a new way to meet the challenges of secularism pressing in on the boarders of the ultra-Orthodox community, both literally and figuratively.

> *It certainly brought out a lot of, like, harsh opinions on both sides. Like, oh, why are those crazy Haredim telling us what we can and cannot do on Shabbat? We want to drive around, what's it their business? And religious people are saying, like, why are these secular Jews—you know, Jerusalem is a holy city, and people should at least recognize that. If they want to do whatever they want in Tel Aviv, or wherever they live, it's okay. Not that it's okay, okay, it doesn't impinge on us to some extent. In Yerushalayim, Ir Hakodesh, why are they doing that?...There's no real need for it. And I think they turned it into an issue, which, instead of trying—I mean, like I have my opinion of this mayor—I mean, he's made a lot of weird decisions, but, like, especially emphasizing religious differences when they don't have to be. ... It was very nasty at the time it was going on. And it's the same thing, like years ago with Bar Ilan Street being open on Shabbat and people got really nasty. We have friends who live right near there, and she said it was really scary for her kids to look out the window on Shabbat and see people throwing rocks. And this wasn't Arabs; this was Jews throwing rocks at each other—the police coming in on horses. And she said they did not have a peaceful Shabbat for weeks until they managed to kind of resolve it by coming up with some kind of a compromise. The street was closed at certain times and open other times and whatever. I mean, if they wanted to find a way of, you know, trying to calm down the situation, I think they could have. But sometimes it's just something (inaudible) and people on both sides who are very hotheaded both turn it into more of an issue than it needs to be.* (Interview with Deena Friedberg, 2011)

Ephraim Lerner discusses an interesting territorial shift within neighbourhoods as more ultra-Orthodox individuals enter a neighbourhood; slowly the neighbourhood changes in character and becomes more religious. While it would seem that members of the ultra-Orthodox community move into a neighbourhood and secular people leave, although this is sometimes the case, there is also a case to be made for individuals simply becoming more religious or secular individuals tolerating or living within an increasingly religious environment. While perhaps there are many neighbourhoods in which it is difficult or

impossible to reach equilibrium within the neighbourhood itself to accommodate both perspectives, this does happen sometimes, and this could be indicative of the way in which the ultra-Orthodox community operates in the Diaspora. In many communities, the ultra-Orthodox community is firmly entrenched within a larger secular or non-Jewish community, and this is dealt with in a way that allows for the preservation of identity and at the same time, respects the outside culture and values insofar as they do not encroach on the ultra-Orthodox way of life and threaten to assimilate or integrate their community.

> *We have once a year a meeting of all members of the apartment, of 33 families. And the question was whether we should have a Shabbos elevator. So this lady said her mother's not well, she lives on the fourth floor—just leave the Shabbos elevator for an hour for Shabbos and you can go up and down and that's it. And there were very vocal non-religious people who started yelling, we've never had a Shabbos elevator until now, we're not going to start it now, and so on. So another lady spoke and said, look, I was here when we first came in. Those buildings were—went up in 1973. And she said when Sukkos came, there were no sukkas around at all. And she put up a sukkah, you know, for Sukkos. The people threw rotten eggs at the sukkah. Today, you walk on the street, you can't find a place on the sidewalk to put up a sukkah, they're all over. So the Haredim are, slowly but surely, moving in and taking over, and that's what the secular are not really happy about, but–but trying to stop it, I don't see they're going to be successful.* (Interview with Ephraim Lerner, 2011)

The ultra-Orthodox community attempts to strengthen its "theoretical" borders and ensure that the periphery of its individual neighbourhoods remains strictly observant and Orthodox in character. This philosophy is closely tied to Orthodoxy. The periphery areas then become involved in a difficult division between secular and religious factions. An example of the tensions around Sabbath observance can be seen in the following example.

> In January 2005, thousands of Orthodox Jews gathered to protest against commercial activity on the Sabbath. Rabbi Rafael Halperin, the owner of a large optical retail chain who organized the event, described the current status of the Sabbath as a "cancer in the nation's body" and called for strict enforcement of the laws. He urged his listeners to take the initiative and not count on law enforcement: "we are a strong economic force of half a million people." So he informed his audience of about 324,000 Jews, who signed a petition declaring that they would not set foot in stores that operate on the Sabbath...He explained elsewhere: "we will boycott and prove to store-owners that it is better for them to close on Sabbath." (Shamir & Ben-Porat, 2007, pp. 87–88)

The historical geographic contraction of the ultra-Orthodox community into disparate neighbourhoods from secular society can be perceived as a strengthening of corporate

position of the community against assimilation from secular Israelis. Perhaps this latest trend of concern with the border areas of those neighbourhoods represents a further step along this process of ensuring that the core relationship within the neighbourhoods will not be disturbed by secularizing influences.

Example 2: archaeology and the ultra-Orthodox

Wide-scale protests have been carried out in Israel over the treatment of archaeological artifacts and human remains. From the ultra-Orthodox perspective, human remains, particularly those of Jews, are sacred in nature and it is required to ensure their proper treatment (Grauer, 2012, p. 25). Normally, this would require that human remains would not be disturbed out of consideration for their sacred nature. Yet, within the parameters of Jewish law, various solutions may be arrived at to facilitate disturbing human remains. These solutions, however, must follow stringent and specific guidelines relating the treatment of human remains (Nagar, 2011, p. 614). Sensitivity on this issue often surpasses strict religious textual interpretation and takes on a complex social dimension as well.

Two large-scale protests were carried out by the ultra-Orthodox community over archaeological remains. One of the large scale protests was carried out in Jaffa where Byzantine-era human remains were moved without consultation with the ultra-Orthodox community as is normally the case (Bahn, 2012, pp. 84–85; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2010, p.124). The interesting aspect of this episode is that there is not a large ultra-Orthodox presence in Jaffa. Protesters were bussed from ultra-Orthodox enclaves around the country and formed a large visible presence in Jaffa making their positions widely known. The mobilization aspect of this protest shows how external organization, from a broad base across the spectrum of the ultra-Orthodox community, can be mobilized on a particular issue. This is done in order to shape and sway public opinion and provide instant and immediate feedback to leadership (political or otherwise) of the importance of this particular issue. Thousands upon thousands of people involved in a protest naturally necessitate a very large police presence with its own complications, and such large-scale assemblies are guaranteed to receive media attention and significant discussion within Israeli society.

The second incident, the Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon, involves another town that normally does not have a large ultra-Orthodox presence. The hospital was in the process of

building a new emergency department, and in the preparatory work for building the foundation of the building, a large ancient graveyard was discovered steps from the existing building. Various proposals were made to relocate the building, which would not entail disturbing the graves located nearby. In the end, however, due to financial considerations, the project went ahead as planned (Sofer, 2010). The Antiquities Authority carried this out using workers to remove the ancient skeletons from the graves at night. This presented a *fait accompli* to the ultra-Orthodox community the next day.

In this case, the normal procedure would have been to consult with the ultra-Orthodox community and involve them in finding an acceptable solution (El-Haj, 2002, p. 270). For various reasons, in this case, a consultation process was not carried out, and this led to large-scale protests. These protests sought to raise the issue of burial sites and construction on the national level and reinforce their importance to the ultra-Orthodox community into the public consciousness (McGeough, 2012). Assembling on a grand scale caused this story (which would be otherwise relegated to the back pages of daily newspapers) to be featured on the front page of newspapers. The articles displayed pictures of seas of ultra-Orthodox people and outlined the religious, moral, ethical, and controversial nature of this particular incident.

Archaeology is often a very contentious subject in Israel. It represents both Israel's connection to the biblical Israel, but also at the same time, for the ultra-Orthodox community, it holds a place of special importance with emphasis placed on the treatment of human remains. This is especially true for Jewish human remains, and there is a great deal of sensitivity around this issue. This is not always reflected in the government consultation process with the ultra-Orthodox community.

Yitzchak Cohen identifies several factors relating to the ultra-Orthodox community and archaeology, such as inherent connections to the past. The ultra-Orthodox community sees these cemeteries or archaeological remains as tangible and spiritual connections of the past and, therefore, demands of the state that policies be in accordance with strict religious dictates. In order to balance these two factors to ensure that religious sensitivities are taken into account when dealing with archaeology, communication is key. Only through a detailed and exhausted consultation process between the ultra-Orthodox community and the secular government can responsible policies related to archaeology be found, which do not compromise religious precepts. Without such an agreement, large scale protests and

controversy will continue to plague archaeological exhibitions as the rift between the secular and religious population widens on this issue.

> *I think that's actually very important. I think that the religious Jews have a connection all the way back to the time when some of these archaeological sites were actually not archaeological sites, but were being used. And the state should be consulting with observant—not necessarily ultra-Orthodox, but observant Jews—who they feel are representative of the Orthodox Jew, as a public and as a whole. It doesn't necessarily have to be ultra-Orthodox. My opinion is that perhaps the Rabbanut in Israel, or some other organization in Israel that represents the vast Orthodox population—or observant population in Israel, get their opinion about how to treat these sites, and how they should go about dealing with certain areas where there, perhaps, are graves that should not be defiled.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

Menashe Blum looks at how using the paradigm of religion to interpret secular state policy is the only way to placate the ultra-Orthodox community. Within the framework of Halacha, there is the ability to meet the demands of a changing society. This, however, requires a meeting of minds and a great deal of discussion. Blum suggests that controversy can be mediated by discussion, but this perspective is one-sided as it only accommodates the religious perspective rather than a more holistic view.

> *As a religious Jew, that Halacha takes a position in everything that goes on, and archaeology in the state of Israel, also there are halachic issues. Moving cemeteries—there are halachic ways to do things and I think if—for instance, in the hospital case there was a need, and I think a legitimate need, then there needed to be a way to halachically remove the bodies and build this emergency room, or whatever it was, for the hospital. I don't see that—especially since the chances are they weren't even Jewish. I think both sides need to be sensitive, again, to the needs of the other side. But if you don't want to see the needs of the other side, it's very hard.... In black and white: I have a need, a secular need; therefore I should be able to do it. You have a religious need, therefore, I should prevent you from doing it. There's no crossover; there's no understanding. And if I did have understanding, then there would be a halachic way to deal with it because there is a halachic way to deal with it. Graves are moved, halachically. Right, people can be taken from—dug up in America and brought to Israel. There are ways halachically to do these things.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

In much the same vein, Yehuda Aronson examines this issue through the religious paradigm and emphasizes the need to be sensitive for the ultra-Orthodox community's considerations. However, there is an interesting contrast in this interview to how human remains and archaeological finds are treated in the Diaspora. In a way, perhaps secular governments in the Diaspora see things in a very different light, and there may be a degree of myopia in Israel in which religious views are not necessarily taken in the same way since after all the entire country is, for the most part, coreligionist. Aronson emphasizes the cultural and religious point of view while taking the historical perspective into account.

Finally, and of importance, he touches on a central issue to this and many other aspects of the social unrest in Israel related to the ultra-Orthodox community: how pressure ultimately motivates movement (and change). Without applying pressure into the right areas, it becomes increasingly difficult for the ultra-Orthodox community to have a voice in public affairs, particularly on issues of great importance for spiritual or religious reasons.

> *The government in the Land of Israel should represent the values of Judaism, which it doesn't. And if upheaval of cemeteries, which is a—even by non-Jews that's a desecration of our —of the ancestors, which—it seems goyim could understand that concept, but for some reason even the secular Israelis don't, and they don't want to, and, therefore, that's a chillul hashem, so it's a very bad thing....This is a very fundamental question. The people in power in the secular government, they just don't get it. They don't get what the religious people want. They don't know what it's all about. They're looking at it from a total—a bird's-eye-view, which is, let's see how we can get ahead in what they consider society and financially and what's good. So if I need—a shopping center is more important, or I need a street—who cares about the dead people from 500 years ago? You know, the now and me is more important than any value system, and they just don't get that. They don't realize that that's not who we are and that's not what we're here for. If they would, I think the whole picture would be different. I don't think they want to get it, so how to deal with that problem? You know, say, could I speak to you for a second? Let me explain this to you? They don't want to hear it. I don't think they would want to hear it. Their—their function as being their—they're doing their job is to—they're—what they do in life, and they gotta just do it. I don't think they're—I don't think you're going to change it just by a brief encounter, you know, just have someone explain it to you. After they see someone doing something wrong, why are all these rabbis yelling and screaming? You know, what am I doing wrong? You know, I'm just trying to help everybody, trying to help society. But you're going to shop at my shopping center also, you know, what's the big deal? They don't—I don't think—they don't see the big picture....When you do something wrong, and that's blatantly wrong, the only way things get done here is by yelling and screaming and hafganot (laughs). That's the way it works here; talking doesn't work. I think, in that way, maybe Americans or whatever are more open-minded. They have a lobby—let's talk about this, let's discuss this. Here, you know, you just—you gotta come to the table (laughs)—that's the only language you understand.* (Interview with Yehuda Aronson, 2011)

Example 3: Münchausen by proxy

A very interesting large-scale protest took place during the same period relating to an ultra-Orthodox woman who stood accused of deliberately starving and abusing her child (Berlin, 2012, pp. 267–268). What normally would have happened in this scenario would have been quite different from the way that ultra-Orthodox considerations were taken into account in this particular case.

The details of the story are complex, but simply put, the woman was accused by a secular social worker of abuse. The child was brought to the hospital for observation. The mother was caught further abusing or attempting to starve the child and the mother was

placed under arrest. In the media, “Haredi leaders...claim that she is innocent and that the boy is weak because he suffers from cancer. They have likened the arrest to an anti-Semitic blood libel, and even called for a boycott of Hadassah hospital where the boy was taken” (Jeffay, 2009). As not to offend religious sensitivities, the woman’s remand was changed to house arrest at a prominent rabbi’s home. A public initiative was carried out in the ultra-Orthodox community to paint the mother in a completely different light from how she was being accused in the secular press. She underwent a psychological evaluation, and during this process, an enormous crowd of more than 100,000 ultra-Orthodox protesters thronged to the streets of Jerusalem and staged a massive wide-scale protest. The interesting thing about this protest is that it was not in favour of child abuse nor was it directly in support of this particular woman or her story despite that seeming to be the purpose of the protest. Rather, this assembly came together to protest something much more basic and fundamental. The protests revolved around the concepts of intrinsic hegemony for the ultra-Orthodox community over their own neighbourhoods, institutions, and community.

From the beginning of this issue, it was dealt with as an external issue by the secular authorities. Rather than having a religious social worker who is in touch with the particular needs and social composition of the community, the ultra-Orthodox community felt that they were being judged by an outsider with very little appreciation of the internal workings of their community. In a similar fashion, the justice system, as well as the medical authorities, was not necessarily consulting ultra-Orthodox community leaders and rabbis to discuss their input on the case; they were rather treating this as an external issue.

Yitzchak Cohen illustrates a perception of the one-sided nature of the media. The media are seen by the ultra-Orthodox community as being a reflection of secular society’s goals and values, and, therefore, the way that the ultra-Orthodox community is portrayed is often negative. Without control over the message of the media, the ultra-Orthodox community fears that the media will spread secularism and foreign values and ultimately influence its population. The media are, therefore, apart from the ultra-Orthodox community, but at the same time, there is a degree of secular journalism focusing on the ultra-Orthodox world, and this, perhaps, has an effect on internal ultra-Orthodox community affairs as well. While these two spheres are usually somewhat separate, there is no doubt that the ultra-Orthodox community is aware of the perception among secular Israelis as portrayed in the

media. The real question is how to shape and control this message in order to have a more religion-friendly dialog in a greater national forum in which spiritual aspects, as well as practical aspects, could be discussed.

> *From what I understand there was a woman who was allegedly abusing one of her children. I—a lot of the information that I heard was through the news media, and a lot of times it's hard to know if anything's been exaggerated, or things are not necessarily to be believed at face value. However, assuming that some of these allegations are true, certainly I believe that caring city individuals, who are understanding of the religious population—or the ultra-Orthodox population, perhaps should be involved in assessing the situation and evaluating what needs to be done. I'm not sure whether the people that were involved from the city were people that were truly concerned with helping this individual and her children, or perhaps were just looking to find faults in ultra-Orthodox Jews. It's hard to know where that lies because, as I said before, because of the rift between the secular and the ultra-Orthodox population, it's very hard to recognize whether something is being judged based on certain feelings towards a segment of the population or, perhaps, the reality of the situation....Well, I think that it—the media blew it out of proportion. I think that—you know, the media, which is run secular side, made it into a bigger deal, and made the Haredi public, as a whole, look bad, and I think it's unfortunate, because (inaudible) isn't necessary (inaudible) the ultra-Orthodox population as a whole, and when you make it into a big controversy, especially in the media, it just (inaudible).* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

In a closed society, a mechanism for working from inside the community is required, which can ease the transition of foreign values. In this case, Yoav Daniel discusses social workers working within the ultra-Orthodox community and, indeed, there are many things that can be done, such as training secular social workers to have additional sensitivity and understanding in the ultra-Orthodox world. Conversely, ultra-Orthodox individuals who work as social workers within their own community can be trained to take into account the unique situation and sensitivities of the ultra-Orthodox community to outside involvement.

> *I can't get to the bottom of it. There is so much mystery surrounding it, you know. There's a lot of speculation; was she totally wacko? I mean, yeah, you need social workers to step in. Again, it might have been more intelligent for them to do it through the community since, especially since, they were dealing with such a closed community, you know, that obviously there are going to be objections to the secular social workers coming in and—even religious ones. You can't just barge your way into such a closed society.* (Interview with Yoav Daniel, 2011)

Eliezer Weiss, however, shows that some of the structures that are required to deal with cases involving external support, such as the role of social workers, already exist in the ultra-Orthodox community. If the secular state took advantage of some of these internal networks such as community leaders or rabbis and through them talked to their community, these relationships could be used to form a bridge between secular and ultra-Orthodox

society, ultimately leading to a greater degree of recognition and allowing a common dialog regarding shared values. In such a scenario, standards of the state could still be enforced and upheld without contentious internal issues hidden by the community. At the same time the ultra-Orthodox community could feel that its religious dictates, customs, and way of life are being respected and taken into account.

> *Okay, again, I don't know much of the details, but I certainly know that the mossad, the—what's the word—the establishment, that's the word, the establishment, as a rule, have no clue about Haredi life. And the way social workers will sometimes do things, for Haredi families it's just the wrong way to do it. If there was child-abuse, there are things you can do, you go to the person's rav, you could—nobody wants child-abuse; no rabbanim, and not social workers. But the question is how you deal with the problem....The average Israeli, and I'm talking average—meaning not in Jerusalem, at least, don't know many Haredim. Okay, so they don't know—all they do is see how he's portrayed in the newspaper, and that's not usually very favorable. Okay, so if all you know is what you read in the newspaper, you know, like the stories in the American Midwest. You've got a Jew, and the guy starts feeling his head, where are your horns? Because a Jew is supposed to have horns, because that's what they learned, that's all they know; they never met a Jew before, or they never met a Haredi, so they don't know what—they don't know.* (Interview with Eliezer Weiss, 2011)

Ruchama Spiegel reiterates the point that there needs to be a solution developed in the community. This can be done through various methods, such as training ultra-Orthodox social workers or coming up with a way that is sensitive to the needs of the community, as well as respects the privacy of the community overall and does not necessarily expose the community to media scrutiny while dealing with issues that have wider interests.

> *Well I think, from what I understand now, there are more Haredi social workers and things getting in the scene. There's definitely suspicion on the side of Haredim towards social workers and—you know, they're going to take your kid, I mean that's another—you know, as far as that; like separating a mother from her kids and things with—. Of course I—you know— there's a lot of dispute over the whole medical condition that they claimed that she has that in general concerned me. I mean I did some research, and it was, like—other people say that it's a medical—you know, where there's medical negligence, this is their way to kind of try and cover it up. There's definitely suspicions there, so a social worker who's going to come in, not from that background, would probably have a harder time trying to solve the problem she's trying to solve.* (Interview with Ruchama Spiegel, 2011)

On this same issue, Yehuda Aronson takes a very narrow view of the outside secular media and makes a claim that the secular media distort certain facts related to the ultra-Orthodox community in order to sell newspapers or gain publicity. Because this issue is a very contentious one, he also reiterates the need for sensitivity and understanding as well as an internal perspective rather than outside officials seeming to challenge the internal hegemony of religious leaders within their own community.

> *The press over here completely distorts any facts of what actually went on. It's possible to take the—to paint the picture of a certain few facts, bend the truth a little bit, and paint a completely different picture. So what the press is saying happened and what actually happened is completely two different things. Then you hear the opposite side, you hear—the rabbis are going and making a hafganah against what happened over there, and I think they're also missing it because they don't—I don't think they're—again, they're looking at a completely different—....I think in this case it was—again I don't remember the exact details here—there may have been a certain amount of what they consider—the government or police or whatever—considered abuse. Whether or not that's true—I don't know the personality involved, it depends on the situation— you know, the individual situation, and—but the fact that they stepped in and were dictating— especially here—it's a very emotional issue, with, you know, parent, child—you know, affects everybody. And that they were trying to say we are going to have the last word on what happens in your family—that could have ramifications besides this particular issue over here, so that hit a raw nerve in the—by the rabbis—that we don't want all these secular people—because today you say the parent is telling the child to keep Shabbos; oh you're—that's child abuse—you're not letting him—you're not letting him go to—to do—to be free—you're enslaving. If I ask a kid to wash the dishes, you say, oh, child labor. You know, they could come up with some kind of crazy thing which is obviously completely out of context that could be the next step right behind that, so —….The issue of Haredi or not Haredi is action, and that's what sells. The secular people love to—the—one second—the media—the media loves to vilify the, you know, the negative, and that's what sells by them. And because it's exciting now, you know we have the bad guy. You have the good guys versus the bad guys, and they're the good guys, and we're—the Haredim are the bad guys. So if you—by doing that, that's where they're going to get their—increase their readership or viewership or whatever, so they just—anything that—it fits their agenda. Whether it's true? Absolutely not. Whether some of the things happened? They did. What's the real—what's the real truth? Somewhere in the middle.* (Interview with Yehuda Aronson, 2011)

The protests sought to increase an awareness of the need for communal self-governance and the desire by the ultra-Orthodox community to govern its internal affairs. The secular community saw this incident as sensationalized media fodder, and coverage in secular papers was extensive and extremely disproportionate to the facts of the story (Siegel-Itzkovich, 2009). The secular fascination with the other side, with the closed world of the ultra-Orthodox community, can be interpreted through film, media, news coverage, tours and so on. Perhaps these two factors, an intense interest in the separate ultra-Orthodox community, as well as the sensational stories that capture the public imagination and manage to sell newspapers, feed off each other in much the same way the thesis proposes a homeostatic relationship between institutions and actors. In this case, the pressures, or perhaps, the failings of the system created a disproportionate news story signifying the great deal of public scrutiny over this particular issue. Again in this case, the ultra-Orthodox community demonstrated wide-ranging solidarity by forming a protest made up of many

factions and sects and became directly engaged in a form of conversation with secular society bypassing the traditional use of community leaders and politicians. While the particular case itself was quietly resolved and no longer part of a spectacular media frenzy, the underlying issue of a desire for self-governance and internal social hegemony continues to be of the utmost importance for the ultra-Orthodox community.

Example 4: The Emmanuel school situation

The fourth in a series of wide-scale protests under examination, which also serves as an illustration for widespread frustration from the ultra-Orthodox community with the status quo, is the incident surrounding a school in Emmanuel. Emmanuel is a small development town in the West Bank with a population of approximately 3,000 (Emmanuel website). The facts of the case leading up to large-scale protests are complex, but in essence, a school was excessively segregated along ethnic lines, and this ultimately lead to the Supreme Court getting involved and forcing the school to desegregate (Alexander & Pinson et al., 2011, p. 171). Naturally, this caused global headlines, and eventually, the court demanded that until the end of the school year, the school had to be integrated. The parents refused to follow the dictates of the courts and were found in contempt of court. The Supreme Court ruled that the parents in question be jailed for approximately two weeks. The mothers of the children went into hiding, and many of the fathers went to jail amid huge protests lauding them for their commitment to traditional values and the Torah rather than face the decision of the secular Supreme Court (Glickman, 2010).

The argument made by the parents was that the school was not segregated along ethnic lines, rather religious lines. Although a majority of the students on one side were Ashkenazi, and the majority of the students on the other were Sephardi, the parents explained that this issue was a misunderstanding. This would have been less problematic as it is possible to have schools where all of the students adhere to certain levels of religious observance. The parents and the school administrators felt that it would be simpler to divide the school into two to serve the needs of each population. The courts found that this was not the case although debate remains over this issue. The court decision itself and the ultimate integration of the school are essentially nonissues because the next year parents who chose not to send their children to the newly reintegrated school, for whatever reason it was

desegregated in the first place, were able to send their children to private schools and bus them elsewhere (see Medzini, 2010). This fact reflects similar decisions on the segregation policies historically, for example, in the United States (see Anderson 2003; Morrison, 2004; Clotfelter, 2011) but really does not address the underlying fundamental issue that the ultra-Orthodox community felt it was appropriate to use state funding in this context. Again, while the protests did reflect some of the more immediate events, such as the fathers surrendering and being led to prison for their short stay, in general, the protest represented a great deal of frustration with the lack of autonomy the ultra-Orthodox community has over their own affairs.

The situation involving education in Emmanuel highlights the need for a national integrated educational policy. This should particularly be the case when using government funding for education. The need for this is to ensure that educational standards are met while at the same time, taking into account the particular religious and cultural considerations and sensitivities of the population being served. Again, in this case, the sheer numbers of protesters brought the issue to national attention. This served to propel the issue of private funding and education to centre stage among secular Israelis. As a result, this has awakened the Israeli consciousness to discuss the various educational structures and institutions paid for by public funding. Perhaps this will lead to more discussion and a consensus on education and the viewpoint of the society at large. Large-scale protests in this context served to reopen the debate around religion and education. This was done through a tangible and immediate physical presence of the people directly affected to make their voices heard. This was done in a way that, as in the other cases, did not necessarily work its way through the political machine, but rather, social protest had an immediate and noticeable effect to bring the issue to national attention and a relatively quick resolution.

There is an interesting perspective regarding the perception of the ultra-Orthodox community as a reflection of its perceived reality and that of secular society. Menashe Blum outlines an ongoing struggle in which the secular press is used to swing the balance of power in favour of a secular interpretation of ultra-Orthodox life. The feeling that the media employ lies and trickery to maintain the hegemony of the ultra-Orthodox community over its own affairs is mentioned as well. There are many reasons why the sentiment of persecution emerges. In this case, dealing with social work issues, such as having the last word on

internal communal affairs, pitting the community against the state, prioritizing religious priorities rather than those of society as a whole, and other challenges underline the great deal of importance that the ultra-Orthodox society places on its perceived position in Israeli society. The challenges to religion by the secular state and attempts to maintain the status quo are not simple processes, and in this instance, a battle over the place of religion in society was fought in the public sphere. Perhaps, as Blum maintains, this is simply an issue of the secular press trying to paint a picture of good and bad, simplifying these issues as much as possible, or, perhaps, there is a deeper level to this perception.

> *That's a difficult question because on the one hand, up until—I don't know what time, you'll know when you write the book—but Sephardi Jews had to go to Ashkenazi yeshivas because there just weren't any Sephardi yeshivas. That destroyed their culture, which I think was a terrible, terrible thing. To integrate—if a Sephardi family wants their kid to go to an Ashkenazi yeshiva, to be told that their minhagim are not proper, that their minhagim are different, or their halachic decisions—Sephardi halachic decisions—are wrong, a Sephardi family, I guess, has the right to do that. But then the question is, what kind of influence will the Sephardi family with Sephardi children have on the Ashkenazi children? To have a law or rules that they can't go to one school or the other, I don't think that's proper, and I don't think it's proper that any government should say that they have to go. I think, kind of like in America, you know, separate, but equal. There are black schools and white schools, but they should be equal; they don't have to be integrated. I think there should be Sephardi schools; there should be Ashkenazi schools. If there are individuals in either one that want to cross over, I think they should have that right. As long as the school agrees to it, and the kids want it or the family wants it, but not that the government should force it upon either community.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

In contrast, Devorah Nudelman offers an interesting perspective—that of hands-off involvement in issues of education or rather a degree of sensitivity towards understanding the special needs and challenges of the ultra-Orthodox public in this regard. But at the same time, she acknowledges that the government in a publically funded school should have a say in how taxpayer money is spent. This adds an interesting perspective into the state funding debate and how individuals or communities view the ultimate abrader in society.

> *It was inappropriate because they are—there does exist—the parents have a right to send their children to a school that fits their ethos, if you want to call it, their stream of Yiddishkeit, if you want to call it—I don't like calling it that. We have it here. In Jerusalem we have it; you have Sephardic high schools and talmudei Torah, and Yeshivot and you can—anyone can apply, you know. And if you're accepted on the, whatever merit or, you know, acceptance procedures, I don't see the—you know, why shouldn't—why shouldn't parents be allowed to choose? You know, just like, you know, I'm sure in America or somewhere, there's this Christian doctrine or dogma and this one—and there's different types of parochial schools for different types of religious streams, you know, and that wouldn't be considered—be called segregation.* (Interview with Devorah Nudelman, 2011)

E. Labor Issues

Employment of a particular sector of Israeli society is perceived as a concrete financial indicator of its relative integration into the job market and into the larger society. The ultra-Orthodox and the Israeli Arab population have among the lowest employment rates in Israeli society—primarily ultra-Orthodox men and Israeli Arab women. There are many reasons for this situation regarding ultra-Orthodox men, both in terms of the priorities placed on learning versus a societal compulsion to work and provide sustenance. In this case, the expected social norms have been altered over time into an entirely new pattern. This is not to say that if one should choose to go outside the ultra-Orthodox sphere and pursue employment, there would not be significant barriers, as well as a high price to pay socially with one's immediate community. For many, leaving the yeshiva world and joining the labour market exposes that individual to being ostracized from his community and being excluded from the social society of the yeshiva. In a situation where every aspect of life—from schools to vocation to housing—takes place within the same cloistered community, the stakes are high to go against the norms and roles of the ultra-Orthodox community. Nevertheless, if an individual chooses to join the labour market, despite the various associated risks, he will encounter a situation in which, as in other modern democratic societies, there are difficult challenges to gaining entry into the labour force. The requirements for higher education, for example, are stringent in many jobs. This may represent a barrier to securing employment with a ministry or agency, even for a menial low-paying entry job.

The working conditions within the secular labour market are not necessarily geared towards an all-inclusive policy taking into consideration the religious needs of workers in all aspects of observance and related stringencies. Unlike governmental institutions, the military, or other organs of the state where there is a conscious effort to create an environment that is as inclusive as possible, in the private sector this is less so. While major Jewish holidays are celebrated as national holidays without work taking place, the conditions in the particular job setting, the gendered roles in the workplace, and other factors may make it difficult for ultra-Orthodox individuals to leave the confines of their community for outside employment. Even when this can be overcome and does not present a barrier, there are still difficulties in the labour market on behalf of the secular employer, who does not necessarily understand the

needs of the ultra-Orthodox employee and, as a result, is more willing to hire someone secular. All these factors and others contribute to a difficult situation where there are many barriers to entry into the labour market. Once an ultra-Orthodox man is in the labour market, there is a distinct glass ceiling due to the connections and education his secular counterparts would be able to take advantage of.

1. Employment and advancement

> The rate of participation in the labor force in Israel is low compared to other developed economies. The overall rate of participation in the civilian labor force for women in 2001 was about 48.4% and 60.7% for men … In two segments of the Israeli society, the Arab sector and ultra-Orthodox sector, the rate of participation in the labor force is particularly low, especially for women. While the Arab difficulties in the labor market are related to discrimination and limited opportunities, for the ultra-Orthodox the avoidance of the labor market is often the result of a choice to study Torah and live on government subsidies. (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 108)

Many of the ultra-Orthodox see no choice but to make certain accommodations, particularly when it comes to fiscal integration into the Israeli job market. The real question behind this is on whose terms will this happen? Employment and entry into the job market is critical for the long-term sustainability of the ultra-Orthodox community as well as Israeli society. The current financial arrangement of the government subsidizing ongoing religious study for an entire segment of society is unsustainable and does not create alternatives in which individuals could have a greater degree of flexibility in choice of various opportunities.

> To counter the poverty and reduce government subsidies, some Haredim are suggesting that the ultra-Orthodox move slightly closer to the mainstream, including taking regular jobs. “To preserve our traditional culture, we need minimal prosperity,” says Dudi Zilbershlag, who publishes a Haredi weekly newspaper. “Once Haredim enter the work place, they'll be more connected with other Israelis.” (Halevi, 2003, p. 14)

Mainstream integration would change the dynamic between the ultra-Orthodox community and employers and perhaps on a political note, make the bloc voting power of the religious

community, which many secular Israelis see as special interest, more palatable to the general voting public. Because the average member of Israeli society would see the ultra-Orthodox community making a greater and measurable financial contribution to the Israeli economy, therefore, this might legitimize various positions the ultra-Orthodox community holds, perhaps even above the specter of non-service in the military. This would also have the effect of leveraging the social capital of the ultra-Orthodox community. This would enable individuals to assume positions of influence in society and attain new leadership roles previously unattainable for the ultra-Orthodox community due to the various barriers placed around education and training.

> The welfare policy has clearly had an impact. According to a study released by Hebrew University, no developed nation between 1970 and 1993 had a smaller share of 25 to 54-year old males in the work force than did Israel. The study found nearly 15% of Israeli children living in homes where prime-aged males did not work. Meanwhile, yeshiva attendance for males has nearly doubled since 1980. (Makovsky, 1997)

A new paradigm would have a ripple effect on the larger society and enable not only employment but also long-term advancement and leadership emerging from the ultra-Orthodox community. This would happen on a grass-roots level with slow and steady progression and could take many years or perhaps a generation for the impact of this type of policy to emerge.

While the Diaspora and Israel relate to the conception of "a society of learners" differently, integration through employment would be an alternative for those not suited to full-time higher Jewish learning. Those who are unable to excel in Jewish studies could find a multitude of opportunities through education and integration into the larger Israeli job market. The social stigma surrounding these issues could be addressed through the transition of some members of the ultra-Orthodox community into the workforce by an initial movement towards employment. This would have a normalizing effect on both the external perception and influence of the ultra-Orthodox community by secular Israelis as well as a changing of attitudes within the ultra-Orthodox community itself.

If an alternative to Jewish studies became a palatable option for many in the ultra-Orthodox community who currently do not learn full time and yet have no other options, many would welcome a potential avenue of change. In time, this would become accepted as a

viable alternative for those not suited to full-time learning. This could have an effect on an individual level where men are able to sustain themselves financially, as well as on a societal level where members of the ultra-Orthodox community who are integrated into the job market will bring some of the newfound wealth into the various insular ultra-Orthodox communities and stimulate the smaller local economies in these places. "[Haredi students] realize how dire their prospects are without some sort of professional training. The question is whether there are ways that can be created to help them, while allowing them to remain within their Haredi world" (Beck, 2010, p. 25). Economic benefits of a degree of integration would be widespread and change the prevailing attitudes towards employment.

> The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies is one of a number of organizations trying to find practical solutions for these problems. A recent study by the Institute found that between 60% and 70% of young Haredi men are interested in studying at institutions of higher secular learning –despite the fact that to do so would mean having to take on military service and losing the stipends given to full-time Torah learners. (As of now, however, the Haredi students lack the basic education that would allow them entrance to these institutions.) One of the authors of the Institute's report, Dan Kaufman, notes that it would take young Haredim at least four or five years to catch up in order to earn a degree, during which time many of them would need to support a family – an enormous task given the indigent nature of this particular population. (Beck, 2010, p. 25)

Yitzchak Cohen makes a very optimistic case for the ability of ultra-Orthodox individuals to obtain leadership positions in religious society through merit by working on and participating in higher Jewish learning, ultimately resulting in the ability to gain access to leadership roles. And in the same way, or perhaps less so, this is mirrored in the perception of secular society and the abilities of an ultra-Orthodox individual to maintain leadership roles. However, as he points out, this is reliant on the prioritization of secular goals, not necessarily of those shared by other ultra-Orthodox coreligionists. Thus, societal acceptance of leadership roles by ultra-Orthodox individuals may be perhaps more difficult than it would be for their secular counterparts.

> *Well, certainly in religious society, if they study hard and grow in their spirituality, they can obtain a leadership role in that position. In secular society, I think they can. I think they have to choose to live their life a certain way and perhaps pursue different things that might not necessarily be on their agenda when they're younger, but if they want to get there, I believe it's possible.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

In contrast, Eliezer Weiss makes the case that ultra-Orthodox individuals are fundamentally not able to gain access to leadership roles in society simply because the ultra-Orthodox population, though a significant minority, does not have power to elect individuals to leadership roles in secular society. This makes an interesting statement, both on the perception of electoral power within the ultra-Orthodox community, as well as noting the issue of education as being central to an individual's ability to gain access to leadership roles.

> *Because of how society, in general, looks at us. How? We certainly don't have the education, according to them, obviously. That's basically—it's the way that the general society looks at us, and they just don't think we're qualified. Okay, so as long as somebody has to get elected, it's not going to happen.* (Interview with Eliezer Weiss, 2011)

Deena Friedberg discusses discrimination and stigma that members of the ultra-Orthodox community perceive towards them by secular society. She discusses some of the generalizations that have been made by secular society towards members of the ultra-Orthodox community.

> *We're discriminated against. There was a study that came out recently, and it lumped in three very strange groups—I think Haredim, Ethiopian Jews, and Arabs. And they said we're all discriminated against, you know, in positions of power, because—let's face it, this is a secular state, and it's been controlled by left-wing, secular people since the founding of it. So they don't—I mean, even Sephardi people have trouble getting into positions of power. So definitely, there's, you know—it's also, it's a stigma, you know. Or if you're Haredi, you know, you're backward, you're primitive, you have 20 kids, and you don't serve the country, and, you know, a lot of, you know, this kind of stereotype stuff.* (Interview with Deena Friedberg, 2011)

Yonatan Smith sees the positive outlook towards the ability of ultra-Orthodox individuals seeking political and religious leadership. He also notes economic leadership is difficult, but, ultimately, is possible as ultra-Orthodox individuals have a larger share of the workplace and can influence society from this role.

> *I would say in certain areas of leadership. If we're talking about leadership in the religious area, then obviously that's true. Leadership in the political arena is becoming more and more open to members of the Haredi viewpoint. I'd say as far as the economic or—economic scene, it's a bit more difficult because of the Weltanschauung [outlook] of Haredim in general as to integrating them within the workplace, so that obviously finding leadership roles would be more far and few between, but in general I think it's definitely improving.* (Interview with Yonatan Smith, 2011)

Ephraim Lerner discusses a revealing account of an individual who chooses to pursue a secular education and even with a secular education, is still denied access into the

workforce due to discrimination of the ultra-Orthodox community by secular employers. Obviously, this story is related secondhand, and yet it shows an interesting perception as to how the ultra-Orthodox community is viewed by secular society; even if the appropriate educational milestones were met, integration into society is still a difficult challenge. This makes interesting comments on the ability to integrate socially rather than simply integrating by obtaining the right credentials, pointing to an underlying social schism that needs to be addressed.

> *I had a very close friend who was a dentist. He went to the school of orthodontics here. And he was interviewed. He got top scores on all the exams, all the interviews, and then the interviewer told him—he says, I have to reject you because you're a Haredi, and on the interview form there's a—if you check off Haredi, you get minus X number of points, and that throws you out. But since you're so smart, I will let you come in, but one thing you have to know, you must do a perfect job. You know, so there's, like, a glass ceiling, as they call it in the States, against Haredim. They don't want them to get too high.* (Interview with Ephraim Lerner, 2011)

a. Haredi labor relations - the example of Matrix

> "The Haredi sector is willing, under certain conditions, to take a little more responsibility for earning its living," said the Israeli online Globes site recently. "That is a message that both the business sector and policy makers struggling over plans for growth and combating unemployment should take to heart" (Devi, 2005, p. 8).

A very interesting example of the way in which the ultra-Orthodox community, primarily women, have integrated into the job market is the company Matrix. A global multinational company, Matrix provides offshore computer programming and other technical services at a much more cost-effective rate than similar services in North America. Matrix has an interesting business model where it operates within ultra-Orthodox communities, usually with the approbation of ultra-Orthodox leaders, and offers a full range of services to its employees, keeping in mind the particular challenges faced by women in the ultra-Orthodox community.

> Matrix Global, a division of the Matrix subsidiary of Israeli IT firm Formula Systems, is based in Modiin Illit, a West Bank settlement dubbed the "future Haredi city." Matrix Global started hiring ultra-Orthodox women in 2004 and now employs 750, many with degrees in computer science or engineering, as software developers and testers. Religious conventions such as not shaking a man's hand or sitting alone in a room with him, not driving and keeping

> strict Kashrut (Jewish dietary laws), can make it difficult for a Haredi woman to fit in, and Matrix tries to accommodate. The company's Chief Operating Officer Libby Affen, a Haredi woman herself, lists flexible work hours, proximity to the home, bus shuttles, close mentoring and guidance of a rabbi who explains religious rules to the customers "on the outside." (Lubell, 2011, p. 2)

For example, women are fully trained in their particular roles, such as computer programming or management, and the training can be quite extensive for women without the basic education, such as math skills or computer skills, which would normally be required to obtain a technical job. This extensive training takes place in a format that is compatible with the ultra-Orthodox lifestyle.

The working conditions in the offices of Matrix also have an ultra-Orthodox character in that they have women-only offices where women and men do not need to interact on a regular basis, company hours are set up to allow women to care for their children by coming in later in the day and leaving earlier, as well as excellent benefits for maternity leave and other work interruptions. "Around 40 babies are born each week in Modi'in Illit [where Matrix is located], which has a population of 20,000 says one worker" (Devi, 2005, p. 8). By building these features into the corporate structure of a company and making what would be considerable perks for an ultra-Orthodox woman working in the secular workplace commonplace, this employer becomes the natural job of choice for high-level work without commuting for woman who are working in the ultra-Orthodox community, usually supporting their husbands who are learning. Because of Matrix's integrated nature into the social fabric of ultra-Orthodox society, there is very little reason for women to leave and find more advanced and higher paying work as would normally be the case with a secular computer programmer. Because leaving Matrix to find a better job would necessitate leaving the confines of the community to go into a secular city to work for a high tech company, Matrix has positioned itself as a captive employer with both financial and social overtones. In Matrix, most of the Israeli operations of the company are run by secular Israelis who see the company as both a social as well as financially profitable endeavour.

Matrix has raised potential employment for ultra-Orthodox women to more advanced technical skills, challenging the often-held misconception that the only jobs available to ultra-Orthodox women are teaching primary school, working in ultra-Orthodox institutions,

and working at other similar home-based or local jobs. Rather, Matrix gives its employees the chance to work with advanced technologies and provides the training and format to be acceptable within the ultra-Orthodox community. “Through training and offering more short-term courses [Matrix] allow[s] students to study advanced technologies, guaranteeing them a job” (Devi, 2005, p. 8).

It is interesting to note that the providers of financial support within the family, in this case ultra-Orthodox women, have less direct impact on social change than would be expected in other contexts (Ferree, 1990, pp. 866–867) through their support of the family. In this particular instance, the breadwinner, the wife and mother of the family, is socially integrated in the community in a particular role. This role is both to provide support from "outside" through labour and to assume the traditional child care role. This allows men in the ultra-Orthodox community to pursue yeshiva learning unburdened. This is a fairly typical arrangement in the ultra-Orthodox community. In this arrangement, earning power does not translate into social capital, and this makes a very interesting dynamic for the role of gender and social authority. The role of women in this framework, through acquiescence to a patriarchal arrangement despite their wage earning, inherently diminishes the potential challenge to the rigidly defined social order of the ultra-Orthodox community.

As an employer, Matrix uses various elements of religious teachings, maxims, and other vestiges of religious life to make the company more profitable, streamline worker productivity, and more deeply entrench the company within the overall community.

> Matrix recently offered a dinner or outing as a reward, but the staff chose to have a rabbi come and address them on Judaism, a perk that certainly appears to help maintain loyalty. “I would turn down a job if that environment didn't suit me,” says Chavie Josovic, the administrative director. “I'm a typical Talpiot [Matrix] person. My job is to connect ultra-Orthodox religious life to high tech.” (Devi, 2005, p. 8)

This push towards legitimacy is a critical aspect for the company because it is inherently at the mercy of the community leadership to determine if this is indeed an acceptable work environment for ultra-Orthodox women and whether the work and skills being taught are compatible with the ultra-Orthodox lifestyle and values. This approach is controversial because in the same way that the military promotes a secular religiosity based on a common theme of Judaism, Matrix and companies like it seek to promote hegemony over their

employees by making the perception and operation of the local branches intrinsically tied with and using elements of ultra-Orthodoxy. For all the inherent social issues Matrix brings up, there is no question that furthering ultra-Orthodox exposure to technology can be an important vector for social change and may be a catalyst for reform within the ultra-Orthodox community with women moving from more traditional roles, even though various forms of technology, such as advanced cell phones, Internet, computers, and so on, are generally considered taboo. This relates to employment as well, with a move towards a more technologically oriented labour force. In terms of education and employment, this means that there is a greater degree of intellectual independence granted to women even if this is merely a function of the more technologically advanced work ultra-Orthodox women are engaging in. Perhaps in time these small steps will lead to an internal examination of women's roles within the community and present options in terms of rectifying the imbalances that exist between men and women in the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. Indeed, "many haredim would get a job if workplaces 'appropriate to the ultra-Orthodox culture and rules of conduct' could be created, says Benjamin Fefferman, director of the planning, research, and economics administration at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor" (Ackerman & Odenheimer, 2010, p. 17).

2. Israeli economy and job market

Israel faces numerous economic challenges. Many factors contribute to difficulties in the employment market, such as Israel being a small country with a relatively skilled job market and an educated population. The level of education required to be employed at an average position is, therefore, a challenge to some individuals who do not have the requisite education (Shavit & Yuchtman-Yaar, 2001). Being integrated in the job market gives a degree of satisfaction and quality of life (Lowenstein & Katz, 2005). For the ultra-Orthodox community, multiple challenges, both within and outside the community, prevent full integration into the labor force. Since the ultra-Orthodox community seeks to preserve its identity, way of life, and culture, there is unwillingness to integrate into the larger job market outside the religious community. There are also barriers outside the ultra-Orthodox community, such as the requirement for national service, requirements for education, educational standards within the academic sphere, and so on. There are allowances for new

immigrants to Israel to adapt to the local market (Raijman & Semyonov, 1995), but similar options are lacking for the economic integration of individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community who wish to pursue a wider range of employment options. These issues make it increasingly difficult for an individual from the ultra-Orthodox community to enter a job market focused on specialization. The Israeli job market is skewed towards the highest paying jobs being in technically advanced fields. This requires advanced degrees, and this type of education is generally unobtainable by individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community who may lack the prerequisite educational backgrounds (Lewin-Epstein & Semyonov, 1994).

> The process of increasing rights over duties has been intensified since 1977 elections in which Haredi members have translated into considerable party power in Israel's coalition politics (beyond their actual electoral weight). The growing involvement in politics is also related to the need for resources given the economic conditions of the community...Haredi men (aged 25-54) who do not participate in the labor market because they attend *yeshiva* full-time rose from 41% in 1980 to 60% by 1996. Scholars argue that these levels are unprecedented amongst Jews in other Orthodox streams, and far exceed *yeshiva* attendance abroad where young men seldom attend past the age of 25. In these conditions, most members attain a modest lifestyle, live in poor crowded housing, and are highly dependent on state support. (Stadler et al., 2008, p. 220)

Learning Jewish subjects without a foundation in secular subjects (the core curriculum) (Schwartz & Shaul, 2013)) is how the ultra-Orthodox community has over time developed a separate educational system in Israel (Gross, 2003; Shamai, 2000). This means that the community is protected in a way from outside secular influences, but at the same time, it becomes increasingly difficult to break into the job market in any position, which requires some type of basic education. The particular way in which the education sphere and the labor market interact has a great deal of influence on how the academic curriculum is structured and developed and the lack of participation by the ultra-Orthodox community in the educational establishment at large (El-Or, 1994). From the ultra-Orthodox community's perspective, there is an ongoing and mindful approach to prevent integration and assimilation through education. At the same time, it becomes increasingly difficult for members of the community to catch up or overcome lacking educational standards when one seeks to obtain the equivalent of a university level education. Coupled with this is the fact that higher Jewish

learning in a yeshiva is not considered to have the same legitimacy as a university degree, even if it is in the same sort of subjects. An example of this would be getting an academic degree in Talmud as opposed to studying Talmud in a yeshiva. This situation prevents individuals from having options and creates conditions for an underground grey market economy in which no money is returning to the tax base. As the economic situation globally becomes more difficult, access to the job market is even more critical than before. To make this access possible, employers need to become more flexible in terms of the qualifications and criteria that they require for particular jobs, and the ultra-Orthodox community needs to be more amenable in the types of education that are accessible. For the educational framework as a whole, sweeping changes are needed in order to take into account the particular challenges of the various communities, such as the ultra-Orthodox.

Yitzchak Cohen talks about how ultra-Orthodox society, as a result of a policy of ongoing non-integration, has managed expectations when it comes to education. This, therefore, leaves individuals with access to particular outcomes, for example, things that do not necessarily involve in-depth secular education, such as computer programming, versus vocations that would require many years of university studies, such as medicine. This arrangement is perhaps due to the rigidity of the status quo arrangement and impacts the parameters of what is available to individuals in society.

> *Well, one thing that I think would be—I think, personally, would be a great help for them, is if they had some sort of an education in—you know, besides just in their high schools—in their yeshivoth. I don't know if it's ever going to happen, but if they were able to be taught the sciences and maths, on a level, that if they wanted to pursue a career as a doctor, let's say, or a career as a lawyer, that they would have the skills necessary to go to college or take college courses, even online, or university courses, so that they can graduate and take a really, you know—a job that's considered, you know, "white-collar." That would be something that I think would be great. But also, and I think it's happening, having courses, and again, I really think they're doing this right now, geared to the Haredi ultra-Orthodox population in fields like—like I said, computers, perhaps accounting, maybe other specifically geared jobs—perhaps ultrasounds or doing some sort of dental work or being an assistant—maybe not necessarily as a doctor. You know, the women also could get training in certain fields that they could work in. And I think they're doing it right now, and I think that's something that's happening as we speak.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

Cohen also maintains that it is important for individuals to find the particular niche in the job market in Israel due to the overall size of the economy. This is also a factor as he notes that there is a bias towards integration with preference being given to native Israelis versus immigrants. This is an issue not only on a religious level, but also in terms of

integration, which certainly has overtones of the division of labour as it relates to education and so on.

> *I mean, it's a small country, and there's not necessarily much opportunity, because you're not dealing with—you know, when you're in a much bigger country, with a lot more people, and—you know, you can work in a job where there might be small profits, for example, but because you are dealing with a larger population, you could still make it and do well. In Israel, you've got to find the right niche. I think it might be a drop harder. I really don't know because I haven't explored that area as much, but it's harder. It's definitely harder, especially, you know— because I, you know, I'm not Israeli, I have a little bit of a bias, because I feel it is harder for someone who is not born and grown up there to be able to make it the same as someone that's lived there all their life.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

This solution of integration, as far as education and employment, is only the first step as there needs to be an overhaul of the way in which the entire population is educated and employed. In society, education is a key element, but there are other factors that may prevent an individual from attaining economic integration. In order to find new ways of economic integration, a new perspective is required that takes the unique circumstances of the ultra-Orthodox community into account. For example, offering university level credits within or in cooperation with various yeshivas and universities would enable individuals to pursue higher Jewish learning, but at the same time gain academic credentials, which would allow individuals to work in a variety of jobs. This needs to be considered on the high school level as well, as this is a critical step in shaping future citizens, particularly in the yeshiva high school environment (Ayalon & Yogev, 1996). The same economic circumstances affect other groups in Israeli society that are not integrated, such as Arab women. A new direction needs to be considered in order to create the conditions where individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community can flourish.

Yitzchak Cohen talks about opportunity and the secular education that many in the ultra-Orthodox community lack. The fundamental question that he asks is: What does religious education equate with in the secular job market? There must be jobs that have a connection between the secular and religious roles. Determining what things are, for example, the equivalent of liberal arts degrees could make major inroads in terms of giving the ultra-Orthodox community access to jobs in the secular world. Essentially, secular education gives individuals an advantage over an ultra-Orthodox education when viewed through the paradigm of the secular job market. Cohen goes onto say that there are alternative options to integrate, such as separate educational options or opportunities in

advanced technologies, including computer programming and so on, that do not necessarily necessitate attending integrated programs with secular individuals while still allowing for technological advancement in a qualitative, if not necessarily quantitative, way when combined with higher Jewish learning in yeshiva. Perhaps this is a compromise, which allows for maintaining both a traditional way of life and at the same time achieving a relatively prestigious occupation in the secular world.

> *I don't think it's 100% there yet. From what I've read, they continue to try to provide opportunities to integrate religious people, but the biggest fear that I have and, you know, I might be off, but unfortunately, most of the yeshivoth Israel do not provide any sort of secular education. So when you're talking about someone who is 20 or 25 or 30 years old that doesn't really have the same background, with a, you know, a proper high school diploma as someone who went through, you know, the system—the secular system, you know, it's hard to know whether those people have the same skill sets as someone who's gone to high school, and then gone to college and university. You know, I've heard people say that studying Gemara and studying other things does hone the mind and does, you know, give you some skills to help you in the workforce. I don't necessarily know what type of careers that might give you, you know, the help in. But certainly having the right high school education in English, in sciences, in math, you know, even in the Hebrew language, would probably give people who are secular, or at least— even religious people that have an education, a little bit of an advantage over someone who is Haredi or ultra-Orthodox, who's now—who's studying in a yeshiva and a kollel all his life and is now trying to find a job. But there are still opportunities. I've heard them. They could work in computers, there are courses they could take that can train them. And if they're looking, I think they could find, but they might not have the same equal opportunities as other people who have more education.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

Yoav Daniel identifies this interest for members of the ultra-Orthodox community joining the labour market as well as real barriers to integration into the labour market. These barriers are coupled with other factors and social challenges resulting in a difficult and complex situation.

> *I know that I think it's pretty problematic for Haredim who—a lot of Haredim—there are certain—most Charedim have no interest in entering the mainstream job market, and for various reasons cannot, even if they were interested. But there's also a certain segment that would like to and cannot, both because of a lack of accommodations and because of hiring discrimination.* (Interview with Yoav Daniel, 2011)

Deena Friedberg makes an extremely interesting observation that for some jobs or integration into the labour market more widely, speaking English without mastering Hebrew limits options. This is interesting because many Israelis who speak Hebrew seek to improve their English skills in order to be more of a commodity in the labour market. This perspective, which uses language as a cultural integrator versus various issues of religion,

points to an interesting underlying current of immigration and immigrants versus native-born Israelis and the importance of cultural and language integration. This topic is not necessarily dealt with in this thesis, but it would certainly make an interesting study of how language transcends religious divisions, perhaps not entirely, but is certainly an indicator for the way in which they are divided.

> *Job market? Well, I think there's a big difference, like, being an English speaker because that definitely limits what people can do. If—you know, I've been looking for another job because I do work for an American company, but the hours are terrible and the pay is even worse, so I'm looking for something else. But without Hebrew, it does limit you a lot. So I don't think it has to do with religious as much, I think it has to do with language.*
> (Interview with Deena Friedberg, 2011)

Yehuda Aaronson describes economic mobility and the difficulty immigrants face in order to adapt in a new society. This is not only adaptation but also figuring out a new social order and way of life, which may not be readily apparent to an immigrant. This also has an interesting undertone looking at society's differences versus ones strictly of religion. This perhaps shows a variation in the way in which religion and society share a common boundary.

> *Most people—the common working person is making a meager salary, not enough to live on. Poverty is the highest in—you know, the smallest percentage owns the maximum amount of the money, and everybody else is dividing up the, you know, the little bit. It's not divided properly. It's very hard for the little guy to move up in any way. The jobs are—for small businesses it's very difficult. Even big businesses, there's, you know, the tax laws make it impossible, you know, to get ahead. In order to function, everybody knows you have to have the (laughs)—the, you have to have the—you know, one income with another income, because you can't have—with 50 percent tax no one can live, that's not possible. And they themselves know that. An anecdote was, there's an American lawyer who made aliyah, came over here, and like a good innocent American reported all of her—exactly all of her income and all of her—you know, kept everything straight by the book. And the mas hakhnasah came to her and they said, mazal tov. According to your own admission, you're the highest paid lawyer in the country (laughs). She's, like, this little nothing lawyer. Obviously, because everybody knows that that's the—you can't function like this.* (Interview with Yehuda Aronson, 2011)

Members of the ultra-Orthodox community have a great deal to contribute to Israeli society through their unique perspectives in the job market. In addition, this diversity will enhance the economic output of society overall and lessen the burden on social welfare while increasing productivity. In many ways, this analysis calls for a perspective that is similar to traditional patterns of Jewish life in the Diaspora and is reflective of the current situation in the Diaspora where even among ultra-Orthodox Jews, attaining education is key to the integration of society and does not necessarily mean a cultural or social demise. In addition,

having educated members of the ultra-Orthodox community with respected positions in society will ultimately have a positive social effect by lessening tensions over government support for Jewish learning, as well as creating new loci of power within society by individuals from the ultra-Orthodox community. This will increase the capacity of the ultra-Orthodox community to gain legitimacy, not only by using their rights for continuing the status quo but also by demonstrating the many contributions ultra-Orthodox individuals are able to make to Israeli society, as is the case elsewhere in the Diaspora.

The current economic situation is untenable as it puts a great deal of pressure on social support. “Almost 60% of Israel's estimated 100,000 ultra-Orthodox men of working age don’t have jobs. They have prompted Bank of Israel Governor Stanley Fischer and Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz to assert that the haredim…may impede Israel's prosperity” (Ackerman & Odenheimer 2010, p. 16). Moreover, “the low rate of employment is putting pressure on the economy in a way that is 'not sustainable,'” Fischer told reporters in Jerusalem in July [2010] (Ackerman & Odenheimer 2010, p. 16). This is feared as an ever-increasing problem since the birthrate for the ultra-Orthodox community greatly exceeds that of secular Israelis. Currently, because so many in the ultra-Orthodox community are not able to pursue other options in terms of economic integration, there are many barriers to changing the status quo and finding a solution to this issue. Many things must be done in order to overcome bias on both sides of the economic question. This includes working towards new standards for education, clearly separating economic and social emerging and assimilation, and having public discourse relating to the elements of what an integrated solution should and could offer to members of Israeli society.

> Policy challenges regarding the Haredim are different as public policy has chosen to support the Haredi lifestyle in different ways: men can avoid military service, receive stipends and (recently increased) child allowances. However, as Haredim will soon make up 10% or more of the population and their number continues to grow, this policy is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. (OECD 2010, p. 175)

Integration in the economy and job market does not mean that individuals will necessarily have to choose between their religious beliefs or attaining an education. The system should allow individuals to attain an education, be productive members of society, and at the same time, maintain their religious convictions in a way that does not require them

to assimilate. For various reasons, this has not been the case in Israel because of agreements such as the status quo; however, the way forward is utilizing a similar social arrangement to that of the Diaspora. In many countries around the world, individuals have religious freedoms. Therefore, at the same time, they are able to attain positions of respect and higher education, helping society and in effect, helping individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community through public recognition of their religiosity and knowledgeable skills. A shift also does not mean that individuals would be required to choose between yeshiva learning and the ability to attain a higher education. The reality is that many individuals are skilled at higher Jewish learning and would choose to remain in the yeshiva. The situation really becomes an issue for those who are not interested in attaining a yeshiva education and would rather be working and integrated into the labour force. Being accepted in the labour force with or without academic credentials is an important element of this issue that needs to be considered. At the same time, providing basic education and basic options to allow individuals more choices is also crucial. The difficulty that many in the ultra-Orthodox community face comes from a multitude of factors that has built up over time.

In the Diaspora, there are individuals who choose one option over another, but, in essence, they have choices, which is not necessarily the case among the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. By presenting individuals with these choices, secular society will be pacified in that there is greater economic integration and less ongoing social support as individuals are able to support themselves. At the same time, there will be new capacity-building within the ultra-Orthodox community to reinvigorate both Jewish learning in the yeshiva and a new paradigm of social order.

Menashe Blum makes the case that many opportunities are only available to individuals who have served in the military. Because many in the ultra-Orthodox community have not served in a national service program and also do not have a secular background, it is increasingly difficult for them to integrate into society. This also causes increased difficulty when they look for employment.

> *The system is set up that many jobs are only available if you have been in the army. So, the religious community that hasn't served in the army, many, many of these things are closed to them. Educationally, you know, they don't have the skills. You hear periodically that a kid that's been trained in Gemara for a lot of years has a very good mind, and he can be quickly taught to do many things in high tech or whatever, so that may be true. But how many jobs are like that? I don't know. But in general, without a secular education, without doing the*

> *army, the society itself, the way it is set up, it's very hard to find a job.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

Yoav Daniel makes an interesting point that while ultra-Orthodox individuals are willing to be accommodating to a certain extent, he thinks that many secular employers are not willing to make accommodations. Even when employers are willing to make accommodations, in order to meet the employee halfway, the compromise is simply too great in the context of giving up religious privileges and rights. Access to jobs in society is, therefore, that much more difficult. Even though obsessively observant individuals are able to integrate into the workforce, in reality, they would be required to do things that would go against their religious beliefs and way of life, making these positions unattainable.

> *Of course not. Unless they are going to—you know, there are certain jobs that nowadays there really are jobs that they expect you to work on Shabbos, or work on Yom Tov, or work on certain days of the year that you're not going to want to work, or work in an environment that people who are used to gender segregation, for good reasons, the accommodations are not available. And even if they are willing to make compromises for the sake of a job, the compromises that are expected of them are too much.* (Interview with Yoav Daniel, 2011)

Sarah Falk discusses a hiring bias towards the ultra-Orthodox community in general by the secular society and, in specific, addresses the issue of women seeking employment in the secular world. Even if one overcomes the hiring bias towards ultra-Orthodox individuals, there is still the issue of maternity leave where ultra-Orthodox women have far more children than their secular counterparts and then will be on maternity leave repeatedly. This, therefore, poses a major issue for integration within the ultra-Orthodox community, as well as among secular employers who employ ultra-Orthodox women and make accommodation for this particular way of life. If that is not the case and generalized rules that apply to all society are used, when ultra-Orthodox individuals try to obtain employment, this could be incredibly difficult due to the very different pattern of life.

> *There are a lot of secular people who are anti-hiring religious people. Like, I worked in a preschool and one of the parents came and they said, I don't mean to be horrible, but you're hiring too many Haredi teachers—to the director. Like, here we are, we're not teaching religion. We're basically watching their kids and people are—don't want you there because you're religious. And then also people—there are people who will straight out say to you, well we don't want this job to be for a young mother; we don't want someone who's going to keep having kids and going on maternity leave. So there is definitely a lot of bias against Haredi women in the workforce.* (Interview with Sarah Falk, 2011)

Yocheved Saks talks about the need for more options and flexibility when it comes to employment training and opportunity in the ultra-Orthodox community. This does not merely

mean looking at new ways of integration and assimilation but rather finding new ways to communicate with the secular public to see how a compromise could be made that is acceptable to both the ultra-Orthodox community and the secular community. It also means identifying what overlap there is that would be mutually acceptable in order to find new solutions for advancement in employment and training.

> *Al regel achat, you want me to tell you what can change? (Laughs). There can be a bit better smorgasboard of options, both for men and for women, and more flexibility with regard to a Haredi lifestyle. And there's certainly the dialogue—since I'm here, there have only been one or two open dialogues between the Haredim and—there's a place over here on Shlomo Hamelech, I forget what it's called. There's a—it was even dedicated to this whole purpose of creating a Haredi-Hiloni dialogue. That dialogue has to be a lot more nurtured than it is now. There is no dialogue, there's no dialogue at all. And I'll tell you something that I experienced in America— that the observant Jews are not angry or upset or biased against non-observant Jews. There's a palpable hatred of non-observant Jews against the observant Jews. And there is a suspicion among the observant Jews that they're hated because, on a certain level, they're afraid that maybe they should be observing too, and they don't. And maybe Dad likes observant Jews more than he likes non-observant Jews. And Dad's door is always open, but you got to walk through the door.* (Interview with Yocheved Saks, 2011)

Menashe Blum makes an interesting observation and takes the inevitable shift towards the ultra-Orthodox community integrating into the workforce for granted. This is an interesting perspective as it would more closely model the ultra-Orthodox community elsewhere in the Diaspora, which is normally integrated into society on an economic level. What this could mean for the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel remains to be seen and if it is going to be the only outcome for society to integrate even on their own terms. The social impact will be interesting as it comes outside of a long progression of internal social development in Israel towards building a society that does not participate in the workforce while being state-supported for religious reasons.

> *Well, I guess, if the Haredi community realizes that they can't go on like this forever then they would need to find a way—like in America, where people learned in yeshiva all day and then went to university at night to learn some sort of a skill that they could make a parnassa—still be involved in Torah, but have a skill to support their families. Maybe the Haredi communities will have to come to a point where they realize that has to happen. The Haredi community can't just support itself for much longer. There are just too many people and not enough income.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

Yehuda Aronson discusses possible changes in terms of education and employment that involve compromises in the normally rigid secular criteria required in the job market. This would seek to make accommodations for members of the ultra-Orthodox community to find new potential avenues to join the workforce while at the same time maintaining their

religious studies and not necessarily having to qualify [and thereby integrate] in the secular stream of education. This perhaps could fulfill the need of the ultra-Orthodox community to integrate but at the same time replace secular academia, as this approach would severely limit the available jobs that individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community are able to obtain. Balancing these two factors is critical to determining the future of education in the ultra-Orthodox community.

> *There—there are groups that are trying to help integrate the religious people into the secular workplace. Mini-courses, not having to do Bagrut and things like that—you know, in other words you get the necessary information that you need without all the—you know, the entire degree without the length of time, without having to go to university, which the environment is the problem, maybe not the actual learning part. So, you know, that's the things (inaudible) that are helping.* (Interview with Yehuda Aronson, 2011)

3. Funding and stipends, including national insurance payments

Funding and stipends have become a key issue of contention with the ultra-Orthodox community. National insurance payments and the safety net provided to members of the ultra-Orthodox community engaged in full-time learning have become a critical schism in Israeli society. This has led to ongoing protests by secular university students, protesting the stipends and other forms of social assistance given to ultra-Orthodox individuals who learn in yeshiva on a full-time basis.

> There remains a central contradiction in the haredi relationship to Israel: Their isolation from secular Israeli society is made possible by the resources they receive from it. The more they impinge on the society, the greater the danger of backlash that will force them to choose between their principles and their economic viability. (Dowty, 2001, p. 181)

The difficulty for the secular Israeli community is that many ultra-Orthodox individuals do not serve in national service in any form, and despite the exemptions and deferments, they are rewarded for this by essentially receiving salaries to continue to learn. This stands in distinct contrast to secular individuals who are required to complete several years of military or other service and upon finishing are required to finance their own higher level studies at university. University students have protested this situation saying that it would only be fair for the state to provide funding for university students as well. Their contention is that students studying in secular institutions of higher learning should be no different from ultra-

Orthodox students learning in higher-level yeshivas. This creates a great deal of tension along religious/secular lines and is central to the historical development of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. The choices, which society faces, are many. Is it best to support both higher secular education, as well as higher-level religious studies, or is it preferable to support neither? The Supreme Court recently ruled against this status quo, which gives funding to yeshiva students but not to secular students, and this issue remains unresolved.

> Most recently, as many as 10,000 students demonstrated in Jerusalem protesting an attempt to legislate the continued payment of 132 million shekels ($33,000,000) paid to yeshiva students with families -- each family receives 1,045 shekels ($260.00) a month. The demonstrators were saying that the preferential treatment of yeshiva students can't go on. Israel's Supreme Court struck down the grant as of January 1st, but Haredi parties would like to legislate it into law. (Ain, 2011)

This imbalance does not take into account the religious dimension of the equation nor the ultra-Orthodox communal values that they seek to preserve by the form and structure of the ultra-Orthodox community.

It is important to look at the underlying implications of funding by the state to the religious minority. Many of the facets of life in the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel have continued because of long-term social advantages, which have gone unchecked for decades. This has led to a great deal of frustration among secular Israelis, who feel that their contributions in terms of education and integration with the job market are not appreciated with government subsidies and funding in the same way that the ultra-Orthodox community benefits from these subsidies.

The question is: If there is room for potential compromise within the existing frameworks, would it be possible for increased secular funding and stipends for higher-level secular education or to create a balance between Orthodox education and secular education, essentially not creating a distinction between the two? There could potentially be a middle ground found so that students in both university and yeshiva would be able to find new ways to integrate. This means that, excluding all the other issues, in recognizing various types of education, new potential avenues for advancement integration might be found. Both secular and religious students have unique skills and could potentially find niche areas of productivity within the Israeli economy. However, if things are going to stay the same, this

will require new ways of thinking about state and religion and how funds should be allocated. This is important because it is not only a highly contentious political issue, but also one that has long-term ramifications for Israel as a whole. Examining the underlying fundamental causes of the status quo and the reasons that things have developed the way they have opens the potential for a discussion about how best to serve the population as a whole, no matter what the particular perspective is on the place of state and religion.

Funding and stipends in terms of education could also have a significant impact on one's ability to compete in the job market. Many jobs require a university degree and recognition of similar yeshiva learning (as an indicator of general education status) would mean that individuals would have much greater access. This certainly applies to programs, which are similar in both yeshiva and university, such as the study of the Talmud. Many religious programs have similar components to secular degrees, in terms of variation of study, and recognition that there is equivalence in this learning may open new areas of discussion. As long as the standards remain drastically apart and there is no equivalency to transition from the world of Orthodoxy to that of the secular, recognition and funding become a one-way street without the opportunity for compromise. Ultimately, there is a place for a discussion involving the utility of religious studies, and this could perhaps be accomplished in concert with secular studies.

The courts have expressed an unwillingness to engage in this problem and force a solution on the Israeli public.

> The high court struck down this discriminatory practice [of subsidizing yeshiva study versus that of university]. As is its wont, the Court left it up to the Knesset to determine how to rectify the situation. Ending the eligibility of yeshiva students for the guarantees would mean about 11,000 yeshiva students would no longer receive an average of 1,040 Shekels ($270) per month, which for many of them would be a significant reduction in their incomes. Extending it to all students on the other hand would raise the possibility of tens of thousands of students taking advantage of the income supplements, threatening the state budget with an extra liability of hundreds of millions of shekels. (*The Jerusalem Report*, 2010, p. 5)

The Supreme Court was ruling on a petition that had been brought by Jenny Baruchi, a single mother who complained that she had been denied welfare assistance as a university student while yeshiva students receive such payments.

> A 1980 Knesset law forbade university students from enjoying income assurance, out of concern that students from middle and upper class backgrounds would use the payments as a convenient source of income while they were enrolled. Yeshiva students were explicitly exempted from this condition. (*The Jerusalem Report*, 2010, p. 5)

Although the court sent this issue back to the Knesset in order to create laws that reflect the interests of the people, nevertheless, with the fragmented nature of Israeli politics, and the contentious nature of state and religious issues in Israel, this crucial step may not be resolved in the near future. The potential for a discussion regarding state and religion relies on the ability of the individuals concerned to discuss these issues and to find a middle ground. This would solve many of the educational issues in terms of recognition but on a deeper level would speak to the stipends and funding ultra-Orthodox students receive, which secular students do not, and find an equilibrium where funding is equitable.

4. Social assistance

Social assistance as a component of the support the state gives to the ultra-Orthodox community is complex and a source of great tension. This support speaks to the root cause of the problems facing individuals who are stuck, understanding the role of society at large in the support and promotion of Jewish learning. This support can be seen as an extension of the fundamentals of the state and part of the inherent character of the state to support religious learning as a cornerstone of national identity. Even if this is not factual in practice, with many citizens actually being somewhat secular, the obligation of the state to fund higher Jewish learning is a complex question. At the same time, when looked at from a utilitarian perspective, there is obviously a great difference in opinion as to the real and tangible benefits of this funding to the state. Both state sponsorship and private funds are employed in the scheme, which has grown in size and complexity over the decades. The result has been the creation of a religious and social model in which reliance on external funding has shaped the internal structure of the community.

> A recently released report by the Israeli Treasury noted that the country loses $1.5 billion annually as a result of the sector's nonparticipation in the workforce -- 300% more than in 2000. This does not include billions of tax dollars going towards *yeshivot* (schools teaching

> classical Judaism), social security, and child benefits for the Haredi population. (Beck, 2010, p. 22)

It is interesting to note that many of these principles are in line with the practice of ultra-Orthodox Judaism and express themselves in new dynamic ways in which to provide resources under economic duress. Social assistance has become a facet of life in the ultra-Orthodox community. This is partly due to the situation with national and military service. By not integrating on a social or economic basis, the ultra-Orthodox community as a whole is generally left with meager resources with which to support individuals and communal institutions. There are many reasons for this physical reality, among them the priority placed on religious learning, which has become a key motivating factor for the ultra-Orthodox community. Yet this intense specialization across the spectrum of the ultra-Orthodox community is not necessarily sustainable without a large amount of external funding. This funding can come from multiple sources, including donations from the Diaspora, but largely, funding for the ultra-Orthodox community comes from government budgets allocated specifically to maintain the ultra-Orthodox community.

> In maintaining separate communities Haredim are in a constant conflict with surrounding society because traditionally, Haredim do not participate in the Israeli labor market, do not serve in the army, and are dependent on the largess of the state for survival. At the same time, however, they have attained impressive success in terms of budgets allocated to them, widening their educational system, the number of institutions catering to their needs and their cultural and political influence.... Haredim were awarded these rights because of the historical necessity of Israel as a state to receive religious sanction for its ethno-national boundaries as a Jewish-Israeli collective. Yet this situation means that because of non-participation in the central arenas of characterizing citizenship in nation-states (the labor market and military service) they "spoil" the delicate balance between civic duties and rights. (Stadler et al., 2008, p. 220)

This is where the ongoing political maneuvering has great effects. In order for the state to provide sufficient resources to the ultra-Orthodox community from the national budget, a great degree of interconnectedness must exist with the state. Through negation by the ultra-Orthodox community, funding is attained at the expense of issues viewed as peripheral to the

ultra-Orthodox community. The responsibility for funding is very different for the ultra-Orthodox community than in the secular perspective. From the ultra-Orthodox perspective, ongoing Torah learning is no less than the preservation of Jewish life and tradition as expressed through Orthodox Judaism. In the ultra-Orthodox view, this is something that demands public funding and, in fact, informs the spiritual Jewish component of the state of Israel. From the secular perspective, by the government funding the ultra-Orthodox community to a great degree and with ultra-Orthodox men having among the lowest employment rates of any sector in Israel, there is a huge lost production value. In addition, secular Israelis claim that keeping the status quo as it is, particularly in terms of economic support, will carry into increasingly difficult patterns of social development, which will be increasingly difficult to back away from in the future.

> Haredi young men, who are prevented from joining the labor force or seeking secular education at least until the age of 30-35, for fear of being drafted, have come to depend on State subsidies and on their wives' earning for their livelihood. In 1993 these non-earning Haredim constituted 2.3% of all working age Israeli males and 67% of all men who had ever been in a yeshiva were not working for a living, officially at least. This has cost a rate of civilian non-participation in the labor force of prime-aged males (between 25 and 54) in Israel to be 12.2%, the highest in a developed world. (Shafir & Peled, 2002, p. 144)

This is of particular concern to Israeli society at large as the ultra-Orthodox community has a greatly increased birthrate as well as a more rapid, compared to secular society, cycle of life events (such as marriage and raising a family). “Haredi families are characterized by young age at marriage and a high birth rate (the average number of children in a Haredi home is 7.7 in contrast to 2.6 in the general Israel population)” (Stadler et al., 2008, p. 220).

This means that future demographic changes will have a ripple effect in both the concentration of power as well as the budgetary allocations made towards the ultra-Orthodox community. This concern underlines the necessity to have an open discussion regarding the cost of the extreme specialization of the ultra-Orthodox community and the priorities of society as a whole and the need to be proactive in addressing the demographic shift that will occur as the ultra-Orthodox community outpaces secular society.

> [However], the Haredi poor are not totally reliant on government handouts. The Haredi community has created self-help programs in which an array of items, from cribs to clothes,

> can be borrowed. Interest-free loans enable young Haredi couples to have a respectful wedding. Haredi organizations make periodic food deliveries, using computerized lists to show which families are the poorest. But the Haredim would be much poorer if not for the largess of the State. Subsidies support studies at rabbinical seminaries, extended daycare, and a network of youth groups. Secular schools often have 40 children in a class and close early in the afternoon but government aid helps the Haredi schools operate longer each day with smaller classes. (Makovsky, 1997)

Support for the community comes both from without through state and other support and from within in the form of various social assistance organizations. In one particular version of this, mutual benefit organizations in the ultra-Orthodox community play a key role in providing safety and support. Yonatan Smith makes an interesting point that there is a great deal of inward funding and participation in mutual assistant societies, perhaps at a greater degree than these organizations exist in the Diaspora, even within ultra-Orthodox communities.

> *Well, the gemach in the Haredi society is something which has no paradigm in the world over. I know that my daughter works for an organization which helps children that are disabled, and I cannot really go into the details, but we're talking about a very big organization. And we're dealing with many, many children with a wide range of severe disabilities, and they've come up with a service where they provide service for the children, a service for the parents. And all this is done on a gemach basis; there is no charge for the people that come that need this help. We're talking about an organization that raises millions, if not tens of millions, and they're currently building a tremendous new structure in […identifying information removed…] and that's just one type of gemach we know they enabled.* (Interview with Yonatan Smith, 2011)

Smith makes an interesting case why there exists a greater degree of economic assistance within the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. In short, the responsibilities that individuals have to each other within society very much mirror the responsibilities that one has to a religious action and precepts. In this way, observance of ultra-Orthodox Judaism is very much a package deal that encompasses literally every aspect of life in an all-or-nothing proposition. This idea can be seen elsewhere in the way in which change, compromise, or reinterpretation of particular values are taken by the ultra-Orthodox community, which sees change as the first step towards outright assimilation.

> *I think the Haredi society understands the lesson of al shlosha devarim ha'olam omed: al ha'Torah, al ha'avodah, ve'al gemilut chasadim. That's the three basics, the three cornerstones of Judaism. Those are the cornerstones of Jewish values; not just studying the*

> *Torah, not just being a tefillah—service to Hashem, various formats, but bein adam le'chavero—gemilut chasadim in all its beautiful forms—bein adam le'chavero, these are of utmost importance. And just as we see there are two Luchot ha'Brit, okay, the right and the left; the right being mainly bein adam la'Makom and the left being mainly bein adam le'chavero, okay? If I might just interject a d'var Torah, a short d'var Torah which I heard yesterday, a very beautiful—it says in the pasuk Moshe Rabbenu saw the Jews with the golden calf, with the egel ha'zahav, and it says in the pasuk, Va'yashleikh mi'yadav. He came down with his two luchot, okay, and you have a difference between the qere and the ketiv, between the way it's read and the way it's written. It's read va'yashleikh mi'yadav, it's written va'yashleikh mi'yado, in the singular. Why is that? The reason is, when Moshe Rabbenu saw the Jews with the egel ha'zahav, he said I cannot give them their first luach; it's bein adam la'Makom. Anochi Hashem Elokeicha, Lo yihiyeh lecha—these people are transgressing on all this. Forget that one, but we have the second luach, where here it says don't steal, don't kill, don't commit adultery, all that. We just will give them that. Let's try to save the situation. And Hashem says to Moshe Rabbenu, no, there's no such thing; it's a package deal, it all goes together; bein adam la'Makom, bein adam la'havero, it's all one package. If you have to throw the first one away, the second one goes with it.* (Interview with Yonatan Smith, 2011)

There are multiple levels of mutual benefit societies. Smaller assistance organizations within the community help various members. At the same time, larger national mutual benefit societies link ultra-Orthodox communities and even secular individuals across the country. This development is perhaps an indication of the way in which ultra-Orthodox individuals have coped with economic hardship and has emerged out of the way in which the community has developed within the Israeli context.

> *And I'll tell you an anecdote. I know a guy who moved back from Israel to do kiruv in America. He brought with him the Har Nof phone book, and he went to secular people, and he was trying to show the Jews what Israel is all about. He opened up the Har Nof phone book. He said, "Look at how many pages of gemachim there are." And people went crazy over that because they felt a sense of community as opposed to just individuals, everyone just going to the job and had no sense of community. And that won the hearts of a lot of people who never saw what a Jew—a community is, a functioning community. So, there's very localized gemachim, there's more general type of gemachim, but I don't think—nobody can match it, what—the chesed that goes on in the religious society.* (Interview with Yehuda Aronson, 2011)

Fears of a growing demographic crisis could be offset by an open discussion regarding economic integration, and addressing the issue of an increasing birthrate disproportionate with the current division between religious and secular groups. It is important to address the fact that the status quo is a recent social development in Israel and is out of step with Jewish history traditionally, as well as the contemporary experience in the Diaspora. In fact, in the Diaspora, ultra-Orthodox Jews obtain employment at far higher rates

than in Israel for reasons of integration, the lack of a national service requirement, as well as a very different social development pattern during the last century.

In the ultra-Orthodox community, a case can be made for re-evaluating the model of ultra-Orthodox study, both in Israel and in the Diaspora. Yocheved Saks uses a personal example to illustrate the point that as a societal function, studying as a profession needs to have some way to pay for it, which does not necessarily rely on social assistance.

> *I'm an American. I'll tell you what I told my children. If you're poor in America, then the government has to support you because you're poor. You know, if you're Black and you grew up in Harlem, you never had any advantages, so you never had any education; you can't support your family, so the government has to support you. If you grow up in my household, and I provide you with an education and I provide you with the ability to get out there and make a living, and you go and you marry somebody and you go sit in kollel and you collect social security, Mommy will not come to your house and eat at your table. She will not do that. If you want to live a Torah life, then you better find a way to finance that.…For most of his [husband] professional life, most of his day was spent in kollel. We didn't live high on the hog, which is interesting—you know this expression in Canada? (laughs) Interesting Jewish expression, but we certainly were comfortable.*
>
> *You know, I didn't buy my children clothing at Nordstrom and Lord & Taylor, but they certainly dressed nicely. But there were no luxuries, and they knew darn well what the difference between a luxury and a necessity was. I hope to this day they do. If you want a life of Torah— what do they say? Pat b'melach tochel v'mayim b'msurah tishteh v'al ha'aretz tishan? Then that's what it means, and it doesn't mean being babysat by the Torah—by the government. Not in America and—I don't think—not anywhere. You want Torah? I once had this discussion with one of the big gedolim at the Agudah convention in America. And I told him, I said, when we first were married, we decided—we said it's very simple; if I want candy I go into the store and I plunk down my nickel and then I get my candy. And we sat and we discussed how we were going to get the nickel in order to get the candy.* (Interview with Yocheved Saks, 2011)

The concept of social assistance is an important factor in the debate over the place of religion within the greater context of Israeli society. For Yitzchak Cohen, the conclusion is that social assistance is important because this remains an important facet of society as religion is an integral component.

> *I don't think so, because—the reason why I don't think so is because I think the ultra-Orthodox, and their way of life, involves larger families and, you know, a learning lifestyle, and that contributes, I believe, to the way, you know, the country is as a whole, and that's—and as a person who believes in G-d and believes that people studying Torah and clinging to G-d, in a certain sense, that they—in the way they do, is an important aspect of the entire whole and the entire flavor of the country. I think it's important for the government to assist them, as well as anyone else. And I believe that there is, now more than ever, a lot more ultra-Orthodox people—quote unquote—because I don't really like that term actually, so much—people in the workforce and involved. And I think that for those that aren't, it's important for, I believe, the government to support them.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

There are advocates for social assistance for individuals in the ultra-Orthodox community not participating in the workforce, but learning through Jewish higher education. There also needs to be a discussion between the two sides in order to increase communication and find a way for all elements to be more integrated into society, placing special emphasis on the value of religious contribution to a society.

> *Yeah, it's justified, but, again, the discussion needs to be between the two sides. Government has a right to determine minimum standards in many things, okay, and I have a right to determine the type of community I want to live in. And if I want to take money from you, there has to be some sort of balance. When the Brisker people, the Brisker yeshiva, I don't know about now, but I know when Rav Soloveitchik, when the Brisker Rav was involved, they didn't take money from the state. They didn't believe in what the state did and, therefore, they didn't take money. That can't be today; today they have to take money. So where do you draw the line? I don't know, but there needs to be discussion, there needs to be—I don't know why there isn't. Maybe there is discussion behind—I don't know about, but it doesn't seem like there is any discussion. It doesn't seem like there's any communication, just yelling back and forth. There's no sitting with calm minds and trying to find solutions—maybe there are—I don't know.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

It is important to note that women have a significant role in the issues surrounding social assistance as well. As discussed in the section dealing with work power relations, a woman's place within the ultra-Orthodox community does not change, even though in many cases she is the breadwinner; the internal power dynamics do not change. In fact, women in the ultra-Orthodox community play an important economic role in order to bridge the gap between social assistance and income provided by the family through stipends, assistance, and other means.

> A Taub Center study showed that 30 years ago, 21% of Haredi males did not work. Today, 65% are not working. A comparative study shows that in the same Haredi communities in New York and London, 70% of the males are employed, compared to 35% employed in Israel. That means that they are not working here because they are able to get away with it. They aren't doing it in New York and London because the government does not subsidize them. (Ain, 2011)

With growing families placing increased economic pressure on individuals and the community as a whole, and government subsidies either being not sufficient or nonexistent depending on the particular circumstance, ultra-Orthodox women are going outside the community in greater numbers than ever before in order to work in the secular job market.

This means that additional funds are brought into the ultra-Orthodox community, yet a great deal of improvement still needs to be made to increase the available economic opportunities for individuals who are trapped within the rigid constraints of national service and limited educational options.

General Conclusion

The thesis deals with many complex issues involving state and religion. The ultra-Orthodox are a unique case within the Israeli context. However, many similar cleavages that rely on consociationalism can be seen in various societies throughout the world (O'Donnel, Schmitter, & Whitehead, 2001, p. 131). Although the unique aspects of the Israeli context are discussed in depth in the thesis, the prognosis for the future of the Israeli state as a collective of its disparate parts is positive. There are many potential avenues for programs to promote positive social change as long as the various stakeholders continue to operate on a cooperative basis.

A new paradigm involving the relations among the various communities can emerge. The conclusion will discuss a number of these possibilities and provide a starting point for an optimistic, perhaps idealistic, way forward. In this new direction, in which the brinksmanship of consociationalism can be backed away from, a solution of inclusiveness rather than separation can be implemented. Moving from separate communities vying for advantage in a system based on consociationalism, to separate, yet integrated, communities is the key to progress and forging a new identity for Israeli society. This could take place through multiculturalism or another paradigm. The fears of the secular population looming in reaction to the demographic crisis from the ultra-Orthodox community can be averted and at the same time, create new-found respect for the religious and social concerns of religious groups, allowing them to maintain their identity without fear of assimilation.

One of the critical elements of addressing the issue of state and religion in Israel today is looking beyond external national issues (such as a political agreement with the Palestinians, external security issues with regional states, and so on) to divisions within the country. Even with external security pressures, things must change on the domestic front. Further, nothing can be solved externally if internal issues are not addressed and solved first. Israel is cognizant that it will face a pending demographic change in decades to come. This

will lead to an inevitable shift on social issues. With demographic growth in the ultra-Orthodox community outpacing the growth rate of secular Israelis, these issues will become increasingly important fixtures on the national agenda. In addition, labour studies show that ultra-Orthodox men and Arab women are among the lowest employed in the Israeli labour market (Rivlin, 2010, p. 238). These two factors will contribute to the need for social change as religious and secular segments of the population are on a collision course. Re-examining social policies in a new and constructive way can lead to new solutions, and perhaps a new way of thinking can be arrived at regarding this important social cleavage. This does not mean that the status quo will be perpetuated. The creation of another defunct system, in which special interests rule over the majority, is clearly not the solution for a wide reaching societal transformation.

This thesis shows how using key informants (who are both insiders and outsiders) to gain access to the ultra-Orthodox community is an important resource to finding solutions for the social and political issues. Using this approach with other distinct social groups that overlap with the ultra-Orthodox community could provide valuable insight into the mainstream and help devise strategies for recognizing social problems and providing a catalyst for positive growth and change. These new arrangements will have a ripple effect through all of society and be the catalyst for positive social change and integration. Through various integration programs, economic programs, educational programs, and so on, the net effect for all of Israeli society will be extremely positive. Yet it must be done in a manner that respects cultural and religious diversity and does not seek to homogenize all of society as has been the case in the past. Creating opportunity without barriers for integration is quite different from wholesale assimilation and will provide many of those struggling today with a positive outlook and potential for the future.

While it is the highly complex and perhaps untenable proposition, the separation of church (synagogue) and state on an official level such as in the United States or on an informal basis such as in the UK or the Netherlands would greatly benefit Israel and alleviate many of the technical issues that currently plague Israeli society. From a secular standpoint, this change would be welcomed and would enable a far greater percentage of citizens to practice a particular religion if they so choose. From a religious standpoint, this would allow

individuals to practice without necessarily controlling a government monopoly over the personal sphere of the entire society.

Separation of church and state would allow for official recognition of state religions as is the case in the previously mentioned states. Yet, it would do so without the extensive bureaucracy required to run a ministry of religion and the inherent complexities it entails. Perhaps oversimplified, the separation of church and state would provide for equal recognition of various streams of Judaism and of other streams of religions currently not recognized in Israel. This plurality would allow for greatly enhanced religious freedom and contribute towards a shared social, cultural, and religious identity, which currently stymies many Israelis as they do not feel included or are not included under ultra-Orthodox interpretations of Jewish law. The separation of church and state would also change the funding dynamic of public religious institutions to similar models used elsewhere in the world. In effect, this would mitigate much of the criticism secular society brings towards religious society regarding non-participation in the affairs of the state while at the same time utilizing state resources to maintain educational and religious institutions. Clearly, the separation of church and state is a fundamental and complex issue on its own and relates to many of the other points raised in the conclusion.

Another proposed element is to find alternative forms of voting. Numerous government committees have studied the parliamentary electoral system in order to redistribute votes better and, in effect, rebalance the proportionality of the Israeli electoral system. Because thresholds for creating parties are very low by international standards, and have been set at low levels in order to ensure inclusiveness of minority elements of society, during the past 64 years, the Israel government has constantly had a factional government without once having a clear majority composed of one party. The result is that coalition governments are often subject to swing votes by small elements of the population on specific issues such as funding for the ultra-Orthodox community. There are a number of issues with the way consociationalism is used to balance competing factors, among them voting issues that seek to create a particular outcome (Horowitz, 2003, pp. 147–149; Binman and Prasad, 2006, p. 54; Reynolds, 2002, pp. 19–22).

Solutions to change voting would include the possibility of allowing higher thresholds for political parties to run for parliamentary election. The fear of this approach,

however, is that it would drastically limit the number of potential parties able to gain seats in national elections and, in essence, silence many minority voices from the various populations in Israeli society. The obvious solution would be to create a majority centrist party in the Knesset that would, in effect, serve as a unifying power. This would encompass religious groups and other societal organizations, ruling through a majority consensus within the party. However, centre parties have in the past sought to reach accommodations even within the party and particularly within the coalition. There have often been contentious arguments over particular issues with elements of various coalitions threatening to break down the government over various legislations.

In effect, a system of accommodation creates a hostage government that has to negotiate carefully in order to remain in power. By creating a majority party, this would be alleviated. Yet, the political system in Israel is so fundamentally rooted in smaller special interest parties, this would be unlikely. The third possibility, which has the potential to remap the political landscape in Israel, is a shift from national elections without local representation to a combination of territorial and national elections. Various scenarios relating to the distribution of territorial and national parliamentary seats would, in effect, change the swing vote dynamic since various national parties have varied corresponding local power bases that do not always correlate with the national scene. This approach would also change the power dynamic within Israeli society and create a buffer to disproportional swing votes that could be used unfairly, as they have been in the past, to influence governments and funding.

A crucial issue is to limit subsidies as part of enacting methods that will foster social change. It is not possible simply to remove all social assistance at once or drastically limit it, as has been done in the past. Without gradual, integrative methods, including job training and so on, a particularly vulnerable segment of the population will be left completely destitute. This is not only the case for the ultra-Orthodox but also for other non-integrated segments of the population as well, such as Israeli Arab women. A gradual process of limiting subsidies and increasing assistance in various areas has the potential to create the conditions for individuals to become independent and self-sustaining. Pursuing a policy of gradual social change with foresight as to the impact must be a priority in order to ensure the integrity of the evolving process. This means that there needs to be a fundamental redefinition of the relationship between citizens and the state. The state can no longer be viewed simply as a

one-way funding source. It must be a collaborative entity in which citizens receive and give in equal proportion. This extends to productivity, employment, taxation, and many other areas and includes the fundamental *raison d'être* of the ultra-Orthodox community, continuing higher Torah studies.

For exemplary yeshiva students, much as in the university system, funding should be made available to those who are qualified. Slowly limiting subsidies and increasing job training or other potential integrating routes are critical. Over time, increased social assistance has led to a welfare trap in which it is often more profitable for students, even if unproductive, to stay within the confines of the yeshiva. They remain on government subsidies rather than seeking employment in the job market. For many, the potential employment opportunities, without training, necessitate a severe pay cut. Perhaps in terms of subsidies and social change, real fundamental change in individuals' viewpoints cannot be altered within a short span of a generation or two. Yet, real fundamental social change can be reached when a new social paradigm arises in the place of consociationalism and looks beyond creating firewalls to insulate the various communities from each other and rather seeks to re-imagine a new and dynamic Israeli society.

Perhaps another aspect of this ongoing debate as to how and in what context to reformulate social relations in society comes out of the reformulation of the connection between the state and the biblical land of Israel. One of the most extreme cleavages among the various elements of Israeli society, particularly between the ultra-Orthodox community and the rest of Israeli society, is the fundamental principle of the inherent intrinsic holiness of the state of Israel or the land of Israel and its various permutations. How modern Zionism fits in with the changing demographic reality is the key question. *How* religion is dominated by ultra-Orthodox Jews is crucial to understanding how a secular state formation that relies on the origins of Judaism to tell its story can be reconciled in a way in which the land of Israel and the state of Israel, as ideologies, can peacefully coexist without necessitating clashes and strife. Similar to many other states, a national religious ethos is present in Israel, perhaps more so with the overlay of Zionism. Yet this does not fundamentally alter the potential for reconciling the state with religion. Particularly in the context of separation of church and state, or perhaps in this situation, synagogue and state, one's views regarding the religiosity of Zionism do not necessarily have to impinge on being a productive and valued citizen in

society. This distinction is minimal, yet absolutely crucial to understanding and imagining a future in which citizens are able to hold disparate religious beliefs while at the same time function as part of a larger unified society that respects individual beliefs. This can be seen on both the micro and macro levels as:

> Additional problems arise from judging the outcomes of individual confrontations. Is it a success if one side gets a law enacted, but the measure is seldom enforced or is implemented in a way in ways which are criticized by those who support its enactment? And how does one assess a situation where the same problem (for instance, controversy over public modesty, Sabbath observance, or the availability of non-kosher food) arises again and again, but each time with slight variations and the nature of the demands and subtle differences in the way the issue is resolved. But what if a particular controversy simply disappears from the public agenda without a resolution? In some circumstances the most persuasive conclusion is that neither side has one. Religious activists have scored some victories, but so have secular Israelis. It is difficult to weigh the closure of a road against the opening of a restaurant, discotheques, and cinemas and on the Sabbath. The score is a tie, more or less. (Sharkansky, 1997, p. 162)

Crucial to discussions concerning the future potential of a new social paradigm in Israel is that the mainstream, the wider population, must engage in an ongoing solution. Through public debate and discussion and bringing social issues to the fore, the majority in society should have constructive input into how to forge a new vision of this future for all Israelis. Extremists at either end of the spectrum will not be assuaged and must be brought into a new social reality. Left to their own devices, extremists would gladly create a more hostile and less cooperative and comprehensive society in which the cleavages perpetuated by consociationalism would only continue to grow. These barriers to integration, even perhaps at first if only on an economic level, must be brought down, and a new understanding must be reached by the majority of society that individuals are entitled to freedoms and liberties without the intervention of the state. At the same time, these factors are crucial elements in the formation, construction, and perpetuation of the state. In the theoretical section of the thesis, there is a discussion relating to actors and institutions and the co-dependency Giddens discusses between them. This is a crucial distinction because there is no element of society that is outside these structures. Institutions are made up of component

parts of actors, and actors are influenced by institutions. The homeostatic relationship that actors and institutions establish is important to visualizing what a future society could look like if discussed, debated, and implemented by the mainstream.

A crucial element to any future solution is increasing responsibility that individuals, communities, and societies feel towards the state and creating collective interest in the affairs and well-being of not just individual segments of society but of society as a whole. While secular society, for example, is concerned with the economic productivity of Israel overall and the ultra-Orthodox community is concerned about the Torah output of yeshivas and the adherence of members of the community to strict communal standards, these absolutes can be compromised through tacit cooperation and seeing that fundamental beliefs do not have to be pushed aside in favour of assimilation into a larger society in order to have a stake in the future.

Recent interesting trends, perhaps presently minimal, yet with a future potential, involve more interest from secular or traditional segments of society interested in "reclaiming" Judaism. This can be perceived through projects such as the secular yeshiva that seeks to incorporate Torah learning and the fundamental study of Jewish subjects along the lines of ultra-Orthodox yeshivas, while students themselves do not adhere to an ultra-Orthodox lifestyle. This is a positive step towards religious pluralism and inclusion. If this is eventually mirrored by the recognition of alternate streams of Judaism such as Reform and Conservative with the same governmental authority to perform marriages, burials, and other elements related to the personal sphere, a new non-coercive form of religion will inevitably emerge in Israel, in which individuals are not obligated to adhere to a particular form of Judaism simply because of bureaucratic rules but will be able to express their religion in ways that they determine are personally relevant. This will, of course, have an effect on the relations between state and religion and the way in which bureaucracy governs religious policies. The net effect of this type of change will ultimately be extremely positive and in Israel, the Jewish state, will allow a far greater segment of society to feel included in the Jewish religion.

It is possible to make a distinction between intellectual and emotional understanding. So while it is possible to intellectually understand the challenges that the ultra-Orthodox community or the secular community face, it is much more difficult to understand this on an

emotional level as there are so many separating factors between the two. Menashe Blum also makes the interesting point that societal standards reinforce the straightest (perhaps narrowest) possible interpretation of religious stringency in the ultra-Orthodox community, and, perhaps, this does not necessarily need to be so in order to find areas in which leniency potentially bridges the gap between secular and ultra-Orthodox society.

> *I think the first thing is to somehow to be able to see the other side, to be able to try and understand, which is—it's almost impossible. Intellectually, at most, I think, it is intellectually, each side can understand the other side intellectually. But to actually understand it on a more emotional level is going to be nearly impossible. It's one thing to read a little book on all the av melakhot on Shabbos and understand it, and it's another thing to actually understand what Shabbos is all about. You can't learn that from reading the book on all the av melakhot. You might be able to tell the Haredi person that your son, a secular boy, is going into Gaza and people are shooting at him, and you may be able to hear that, but you can't understand that because you never experienced it, and you don't have anybody within your community that has experienced it. So, it will be very hard emotionally to understand the other side. And without that understanding and that emotional understanding, I don't know how you're going to bridge the gap. Because, again, everything is black and white; there's no room for compromise. I don't know if it's true or not, but it seems in many ways that the Haredi community has picked a halachic point of view which doesn't give much leeway. Even though within Halachaa there is leeway, and if you're not going to be able to give a little bit, I don't know how it's going to work out; I don't know.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

Deena Friedberg touches upon bridging and resolving social issues by finding commonalities between secular Israelis and those in the ultra-Orthodox community.

> *Well, there should be more understanding of each other. There should be people sitting down together and trying to do that. Like bridging—I mean people are trying to do that. There are groups trying to come together. Not necessarily, oh, we're going to convert them to the truth, but just to sit down as people and say, look, you know, we have a lot of issues, some we can see eye-to-eye on, some that we don't, but we should try to talk together as people, you know, as a small minority group in a hostile sea—which is what we are—and try to see how we could come together, not separate each other.* (Interview with Deena Friedberg, 2011)

There is a perceived need by the ultra-Orthodox community for more education regarding the ultra-Orthodox community and religious principles. In general, this would serve to conceptualize and explain the ultra-Orthodox way of life and religious values in order to bring common understanding. Then, it might be possible to bridge the gap between secular and religious Israelis by discussing some commonalities in Judaism from a religious perspective and outline the need of discussing these values from a religious perspective.

> *I think to improve Israeli society as a whole, the secular side needs more education about Torah u'mitzvot. And we're not talking about something rote where they have to study for bagrut; be it Torah shebe'al peh, Torah—Tanach, and just to study the texts, but to*

> *understand. And let's say just to get an organization such as Arachim or such a type of organization: Hidabroot or Shofar or organizations that deal with kiruv, organizations that understand the youth and are able to relate to them, to communicate to the youth and to show them the beauty of leading a Torah life—show them the beauty and the understanding of what it means. Not just as a dry text or a poster that they've seen in school.* (Interview with Yonatan Smith, 2011)

There is an extreme perspective that the present situation is untenable. The commonality felt through the ultra-Orthodox perspective, in this view, is brought to an extreme with the establishment of a theocracy. This means that the ultra-Orthodox extreme could become the norm, and everyone across the spectrum would be forced to participate. This perspective breaks down the barriers within the ultra-Orthodox community and Israeli society at large as in a theocracy there would be little room for dialog among groups with differing religious views. It is interesting that this approach, one that advocates for the return of pre-Diaspora centralized Judaism is being promulgated as a solution to solve the fractious divisions within the ultra-Orthodox community and Israeli society today.

> *What do you think should ideally happen to improve—I guess—I told you, my ideal would be that we have a Sanhedrin in charge making the rules. It gets rid of the problem of Ashkenazi versus Sephardi versus Temani, versus Edot HaMizrach. There's no—it's basically one big group of rabbis (inaudible), and I think it would definitely—it would get rid of a lot of the cultural whatevers, because everyone would just be Jewish, and everyone would be dati, and you no longer have Ashkenazi, Sephardi, you know. You no longer have these cultural inflates....On a religious level, if the country were run by a Sanhedrin instead of a Knesset, for example, everyone would be keeping Shabbat, everyone would be keeping kashrut. And if they weren't, they'd be thrown into jail. Therefore, in a religious level everyone would be on the same place. And those who didn't know, they would learn.* (Interview with Miriam Jacoby, 2011)

Yitzchak Cohen highlights the way in which society will change and adapt in order to meet the current needs. In the context of Israel, the commonality, he notes, among the various citizens will carry, no matter what the circumstance is. It is interesting to note that in this interview, the emphasis is on the external versus the internal visions within Israeli society, and these are seen as the ultimate issue, rather than internal divisions.

> *Look I mean, we've made until now. Certainly everyone seems to have an opinion. I'm sure that will continue and will morph into however we morph into, based on, you know, what the needs are at any given time. I mean, there are always going to be disagreements, but the end of the day, the Jewish people are one family, and I think even the secular Jews and the religious Jews do recognize that we have a huge threat from the Arabs around us, the Arab countries that want to destroy Israel, and the terrorists that want to destroy Israel, and at the end of the day, you know, when push comes to shove, they make it work, and we'll make it.* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

Menashe Blum's following interview has an interesting tone, which ranges from the idea that a failure to coexist will simply degenerate in catastrophic terms into a mass exodus of ultra-Orthodox individuals from Israel. This follows through with the idea that communication is key, and top leaders need to have the availability to speak to each other. The interview concludes with the concept of the return of the Messiah—ultimately the perfect solution for what may otherwise be an intractable argument between secular and ultra-Orthodox communities within Israel.

> *Meaning, if we don't find a way to deal with each other? I remember I once saw, I think maybe it was the Chazan Ish, maybe, when the government wanted to draft girls into the army and the frum Jews were all—the gedolim were talking about it was pretty much time to say, time to leave Israel. Will it get to that point? I don't think it will get to that point. You know, the religious parties are very powerful, so I don't think it will ever get to that point. But will it continue like this? There are brilliant people on both sides, and they have to be able to somehow talk to one another and find a way out of the mess, I don't know. I'm not that brilliant, I'm not that powerful, but there has to be a way. I think it has to be a way before Mashiach comes, too. There has to be a way; I don't know what it is.* (Interview with Menashe Blum, 2011)

Yonatan Smith posits that the ultimate plan cannot be known, but it appears that everything is moving into messianic times. As a result, the eventual outcome will, hopefully, he maintains, be in the ultra-Orthodox community's favor, and there seems to be, while the plan is not itself known, movement in the direction of the end of days. This has an interesting connotation on the public debate over the place of religion with secular and ultra-Orthodox society.

> *Well, I think it's definitely a tough situation. It's definitely a tough situation and—I understand it's yemot haMashiach, and we don't know when, but we definitely see things changing in the world around us. And as we can see now, yad sarim ve'melachim beyad Hashem. We see governments being overthrown. We're seeing in entire Middle East region, okay: Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, things are—great changes, great upheavals are coming, and, hopefully, that's all for the good. And hopefully that's all for our good. I believe—our viewpoint is that everything that does take place in the world around us, there is a reason for us to be affected. It does affect us and, hopefully, for the good.* (Interview with Yonatan Smith, 2011)

Yitzchak Cohen discusses how bridges need to be built to find a common element between the extremes in the ultra-Orthodox community and the secular community, which can be found in causes such as the pursuit for social justice.

> *I think there will need to be bridges built between the secular and the ultra-Orthodox community, so that they can live in better harmony....Just organizing, perhaps, groups where they can talk together about their differences, where they can explore the values that they do share, and perhaps work together to just make Israel a better place. You know, I think that if*

> *you can find—and I think people are already doing this, a common denominator, or in Hebrew it's called the tzad ha'shaveh, between the secular Chiloni and the ultra-Orthodox Haredi, and have them spend time, perhaps on ideas that are—what do you call that? Social justice and things that even the secular Jew cares about, that is rooted in the Torah, that they can (inaudible).* (Interview with Yitzhak Cohen, 2011)

The Future of Service and the State

An extreme tactic for social engineering would be to tie the rights and privileges of citizenship (voting) or other measures of citizenship to national service, education, taxation, and some other method to ensure that voting and citizenship retain their intended meaning. The right to vote has been linked to national service in history, for example in the American Revolutionary Period:

> First-class American citizenship – at this time including the right to vote – often was connected with military service and national defense. Nine of the original states constitutions included the "duty of the citizen to render military service" and compelled *Him* to do so if necessary" (Fenner and DeYoung, 2001, p.54).

Although this is seemingly a solution to form a homogeneous society, Israel is comprised of many cultures, viewpoints, and motivations, often at odds with the official state "party line," and it is this very diversity that gives Israel its unique character. Therefore, forcing participation in exchange for rights would be impossible in the Israeli context, which has thus far included minority opinion as can be understood through the context of a fractured political process with coalition governments.

Reclamation of Jewish learning: the Secular Yeshiva

An interesting phenomenon in Israeli secular/religious relations has been the development of the secular yeshiva movement. Central to this movement is the inherent question about ownership of Jewish knowledge. Secular proponents of the higher Jewish education institutions, which have begun to create a great deal of secular public interest, claim that there is a distinct separation between religiosity and pure knowledge (Roy, 2010, p. 88). They challenge the ultra-Orthodox claim that there cannot be a separation between a religious lifestyle and religious knowledge and ultimately claim that the corpus of Jewish knowledge is as much their birthright as that of any other Israeli citizen. This intellectual challenge has encouraged many to take time out of their academic studies, in many cases

without academic credit, to study Jewish tradition and law in an egalitarian forum without religious overtones. It is interesting to note that this movement has not sparked a cultural renaissance, changing the way in which Judaism is administered in the state of Israel, such as is the goal of the Conservative and Reform movements. Secular Judaism, for administrative purposes, remains unrecognized. And while some secular yeshivas can potentially receive state funding, their approach has been more targeted towards the pursuit of religious knowledge rather than trying to change the lifestyle of the ultra-Orthodox or even the majority of secular Jews in Israel.

> In spite of the middle category, the religious-secular status quo seems in recent years to have been crumbling under new pressures. In the Israeli parliament a steady growth can be observed in the power of both Haredi (Jewish Orthodox) parties and an opposing ideologically militant secular camp. Political and public debates over the questions of conscription of religious Jews, gay rights, and the sale of non-kosher food, and commercial activity on Saturday all are part of a growing religious-secular struggle that seems to defy any attempt to find new compromises. The polarization is also reflected in the public's opinion of religious-secular relations. (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 32)

Change is slow but ongoing. New dramatic action must be taken in order to work within the boundaries of Halacha and acknowledge challenges to the social organization of Jews in Israel and the Diaspora. This includes a broad view of the changing social, economic, and societal factors.

Potential Future Scenarios

Three potential scenarios in the conclusion, ranging from complete secularization, to continuing with the current status quo, and finally to a religious turn in Israeli society, are examined as potential avenues for thought into the future of the face of Israeli democracy and religion and state relations.

I: Complete secularization

The first of three potential scenarios involving the future of the state and religious relations is that of complete secularization where governance of the personal sphere through religious interpretations would no longer apply, whether in the strictest sense of the term with

a complete separation of religion and state or a more moderate approach that seeks to incorporate a state religion in name only. A process of complete secularization involving the absolute separation of church and state, the revamping of the relationship between religious authority, the state and the population, and an overhaul of personal sphere laws to allow for civil marriage and so on, will fundamentally change the way in which Judaism is perceived within the larger context of Israeli society. This approach presents a complex dilemma as Israel is a Jewish state, though the term *Jewish* is fundamentally undefined and requires a certain de facto recognition of what it means to be Jewish. Therefore, a completely secularized state would lead to fundamental difficulties identifying what it means to be Israeli or, for that matter, how secular Zionism relates to Judaism and vice versa. There are many gradations of the lack of separation of church and state, and there are many complex interdependencies in Israel regarding the bureaucratization of religion; these problems cannot be easily alleviated by completely moving religion from the public sphere. Should a complete separation of church and state occur, Israeli society will need to forge a new identity and collectively decide what it means to be Israeli and what form national unity would take in a country comprised of individuals from such disparate backgrounds. On the flip side, a complete separation of church and state would allow for a greater degree of religious freedom for groups currently not recognized by the government and would allow individuals far more flexibility in the way in which they wish to practice their religion.

II: Status quo

The second scenario is continuing the current situation of the status quo in which the various cleavages and flash points that occur between secular and religious society are merely bargained away over the long term in an attempt to maintain a balance among various segments of society without one ever taking advantage over another as explained through the theory of consociationalism. The problem with this approach is that while on the surface, minor battles are determined or passed on one way or another, the overall war in the big picture is slowly being won by secular Israelis as explained throughout the thesis. An ongoing shift towards secularization for the majority, while maintaining strategic victories for the religious minority, essentially creates a community that separates itself from the larger Israeli society and seeks to maintain a degree of internal hegemony over its affairs. If this

system were productive in a way that ultra-Orthodox individuals were productive and happy in society, able to gain parity with their secular counterparts, and had the ability to have a certain amount of internal and external political and social control, the situation would be quite different. However, this is not the case as many ultra-Orthodox individuals are trapped in the system that seeks to perpetuate a very particular social pattern that does not necessarily serve the best interest of every member of society.

While it is important to recognize that integration, particularly economic growth, is not the equivalent of full assimilation and requires every individual to become secular or for that matter the reverse, it is important to maintain an element of diversity yet allow individuals the freedom to succeed in society. The present situation does not meet these demands and even more so has created increasing pressures on the ultra-Orthodox community to conform to secular standards. As a result, a longstanding war of one-upmanship has been waged by both secular and ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel resulting in a deadlock that ultimately, for political reasons, keeps issues and discussion relating to social advancement in a virtual siege being held hostage by special interests. The need for change is clear. Preferably, this change can be enacted or enabled on a consensus basis in which the input of citizens re-creates and re-imagines new possibilities for the state of Israel incorporating both religious aspects though at the same time not constraining individuals across the spectrum in their private lives.

III: A religious theocracy

The third scenario is the opposite extreme, creating a state based in either literal or interpretive Rabbinic Judaism that essentially becomes a theocracy. This can be either along the lines of Iran, which incorporates secular forms of government alongside religious leadership or a pure theocracy as in other contexts that completely eliminate the non-religious bureaucracy altogether. This, of course, is an unlikely scenario given the demographic makeup of the state of Israel. It is interesting to examine what the potential consequences could be for the majority of Israelis. Presently, secular citizens of Israel feel inconvenienced by the religious restrictions on personal sphere issues, most notably those of marriage, divorce, burial, and religious identity.

How much more so would this be the case if ultra-Orthodox interests governed the country? There has been discussion of the possibility of increased religious alliances, particularly as part of a movement of "returnees to the faith," in which new-found religiosity would reshape the current political landscape. This also represents a remote possibility due to the political cleavages present in Israeli society and the factionalism that defines Israeli politics. However, the fundamental question of how would ultra-Orthodox interests govern the larger population is an interesting question because the majority of Israelis are not ultra-Orthodox and therefore would constantly be in conflict with ultra-Orthodox values. The special privileges that ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel are afforded in the state of Israel, which were not present in the context of historical Jewry before the creation of the state, necessitate ultra-Orthodox Jews living as a minority.

As a majority, the priorities of the state would be quite different and perhaps would out of necessity need to be re-evaluated. Therefore, many of the current politically contentious issues, such as military service, would have to be met realistically by a religious government; this type of bargaining and negotiation is present in ongoing negotiations with Israeli religious political parties. A sort of de facto recognition of the status quo and understanding of where the parameters lie in terms of issues that can be negotiated and issues that have to be tacitly accepted exists as there is no viable alternative.

Future Questions

There are many unanswered questions in this field. While this thesis has outlined many of the factors and proposed a way forward for the ultra-Orthodox community and Israeli society, many avenues have been left unexplored. Future questions need to be asked about finding a permanent solution to these social divisions. Not addressing these issues will only lead to new and more complicated rifts forming, with the question of Jewish identity and what this means to the Jewish state forever being bounced back and forth. Civic participation and other types of integration need to be re-examined. In addition, new ways of imagining a society that both takes direction from and serves the interest of all, participants and non-participants alike, need to be thought of to avoid a demographic crisis and/or a fundamental shift in the meaning and mission of the state.

Questions that could be asked include: Are there solutions involving changes in the electoral process, while maintaining the same type of balance and representation of the past? Can the ultra-Orthodox community become partners in the reformation of state and religion in Israel to form a new type of status quo? Can secular Zionism be reimagined to include a religious element? Are assimilation and integration the only way in which to bring ultra-Orthodox society in line with the target goals of the OECD Israeli society? This includes more integration in the workforce for the religious community, a greater number of educated individuals, less primary social support and increased integration with society. Should additional efforts be made to customize the integration of various groups to allow them easier access to mainstream Israeli society? Could a form of nonreligious, egalitarian, multiculturalism work in the Israeli context? What would the state look like after separating religion from state, or alternatively, what would open funding for all religious groups, without bureaucracy, look like? What would an in-depth research project among the ultra-Orthodox community resemble? Would taking religious and social party commentary into account substantially change the conclusions of this work? Would this then present a new possibility for the future?

Summation

Social change is difficult to come by, particularly in the Israeli context where the state was not founded on the basis of a written constitution and very different ideologies drive various component factions of society. Yet, for the vast majority of Israeli citizens, there is an underlying commonality, despite all the political and social differences among them. Creation of the state following the Holocaust and incorporating Jewish populations from all over the world are not without problems, yet fundamentally, there is a way forward in which common ground can be found. Jewish tradition throughout the ages affords a particular view of how a state can be formulated with others and, perhaps, in the case of the state of Israel. Other views are comprised of the secular or traditional ideologies, which ultimately the ultra-Orthodox community will have to meet halfway in order to reach an accommodation that serves the interest of the state and all its component communities.

Appendix 1: Interviews

List of Interviews:

Interview #1 - Gershon Plony

The demographic and biographic information for this interviewee was not recorded, as per the interview subject's request. The interview and material were discarded.

Interview #2 - Yitzhak Cohen

Yitzhak Cohen is in his 30s, male, and identifies as being Ashkenazi. He was born in Israel and considers his hometown in Israel to be Jerusalem. He characterizes the community he currently lives in as being extremely Haredi.

Interview #3 - Menashe Blum

Menashe is in his mid-60s, male, identifies with being Ashkenazi, and immigrated in the 1980s to Israel from the United States. His hometown in Israel is in the centre of the country, and he describes the community which he lives in as American Haredi.

Interview #4 - Yoav Daniel

Yoav is in his 40s, male, and he identifies as being Ashkenazi. He immigrated in the 1990s to Israel from the United States. He currently lives in the centre of Israel and describes the community which he lives in as being Haredi.

Interview #5 - Eliezer Weiss

Eliezer is in his mid-50s, male, and identifies as being Ashkenazi. He immigrated to Israel over 30 years ago. He states that his hometown is Jerusalem and the community which he lives in, he classifies as Haredi.

Interview #6 - Ruchama Spiegel

Ruchama is in her mid-40s, female, identifies as being Ashkenazi, and immigrated approximately 20 years ago from Canada. She currently lives in Jerusalem and describes the community which she lives in as being Haredi.

Interview #7 - Devorah Nudelman

Devorah is in her early 50s, female, and identifies as being Ashkenazi. She immigrated to Israel approximately 20 years ago. Her hometown is Jerusalem and she describes the community she lives in as being cohesively Haredi.

Interview #8 - Deena Friedberg

Deena is in her early 60s, female, and identifies as being Ashkenazi. She immigrated to Israel approximately 20 years ago from Canada, and identifies her hometown as Jerusalem. She describes the community which she lives in as "*mitchared*," becoming religious, with changes happening in the neighborhood's religious character.

Interview #9 - Yonatan Smith

Yonatan Smith is in his mid-50s, male, and identifies himself as being normative Ashkenazi. He immigrated to Israel approximately 20 years ago and currently resides in Jerusalem. He describes the community that he lives in as being mostly Haredi and partly Dati Leumi.

Interview #10 - Miriam Jacoby

Miriam is in her mid-20s, female, and identifies as being Ashkenazi. She immigrated recently from the United States and currently resides in the centre of the country. She describes her community as being an open community of a mixed character.

Interview #11 - Moshe Auerbach

Moshe is in his early 30s, male, and identifies as being of Ashkenazi descent. He immigrated to Israel approximately 10 years ago and currently resides in Jerusalem. He characterizes the community that he currently lives in as being a Haredi mix with components of Litvish, Hassidic, and Sephardi residents in the community.

Interview #12 - Leah Halpern

Leah is in her late 20s, female, and identifies as being Ashkenazi. She immigrated several years ago from the United States and currently resides in Jerusalem. She characterizes the community that she currently lives in as being mostly Haredi, approximately 95%, with the remaining 5% mixed.

Interview #13 - Sarah Falk

Sarah is in her early 20s, female, and identifies as being of Ashkenazi descent. She immigrated recently from the United States and currently resides in Jerusalem. She describes the community that she lives in as being 90% Haredi and 10% secular.

Interview #14 - Rivka Lowey

Rivka is in her early 60s, female, and identifies as being Ashkenazi. She immigrated to Israel approximately 10 years ago from the United States, currently resides in Jerusalem, and characterizes the neighborhood which she lives in as being Haredi.

Interview #15 - Yehuda Aronson

Yehuda is in his late 40s, male, and identifies as being of Ashkenazi descent. He immigrated approximately 20 years ago from the United States and currently resides in Jerusalem. He describes the community that he is living in as predominantly religious.

Interview #16 - Ephraim Lerner

Ephraim is in his early 60s, male, and identifies as being of Ashkenazi descent. He immigrated recently to Israel from the United States and currently resides in Jerusalem. He characterizes his neighborhood as being mixed, with some Haredi elements, some national religious elements, some secular elements, and some anti-religious elements.

Interview #17 - Yocheved Saks

Yocheved is in her early 60s, female, and identifies as being of Ashkenazi descent. She recently immigrated to Israel from the United States and currently resides in Jerusalem. She

describes the community in which she currently lives as mixed with 50% being Ashkenazi and 50% being Sephardi, as well as 50% being religious and 50% being secular.

Appendix 2: Research Material

Ethics Approval

LaurentianUniversity
UniversitéLaurentienne

Research, Development &
Creativity Office
Bureau de la recherche,
du développement et de la créativit
Tel/Tél.: 705-675-1151, 3944
Fax/Téléc.: 705-671-3850

APPROVAL FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
Research Ethics Board – Laurentian University

This letter confirms that the research project identified below has successfully passed the ethics review by the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board (REB). Your ethics approval date, other milestone dates, and any special conditions for your project are indicated below.

TYPE OF APPROVAL	New	X	Modifications to project		Time extension	

Name of Principal Investigator and school/department	Sydney Shapiro (Political Science – Laurentian University) with Dre Aurélie Lacassagne
Title of Project	*State and Religion: The Conflicts of Ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel*
REB file number	2010-08-01

Date of original approval of project	November 22 2010
Date of approval of project modifications or extension *(if applicable)*	
Final/Interim report due on	November 22 2011
Conditions placed on project	None

During the course of your research, no deviations or changes to the protocol, recruitment or consent forms may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. If you wish to modify your research project, please complete the appropriate REB form.

All projects must submit a report to REB at least once per year. If involvement with human participants continues for longer than one year (e.g. you have not completed the objectives of the study and have not yet terminated contact with the participants, except for feedback of final results to participants), you must request an extension using the appropriate REB FORM.

In all cases, please ensure that your research complies with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS). Also please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence with the REB office.

Congratulations, and best of luck in conducting your research.

Daniel Côté, Ph.D.
Chair of the *Laurentian University Research Ethics Board*
Laurentian University

Final Report

LaurentianUniversity
UniversitéLaurentienne

FORM FOR ANNUAL REPORT, REPORT COMPLETION, AND REQUEST FOR CHANGES TO A PROJECT
for research projects involving human participants

File #	2010-08-01
Title of Project	*State and Religion: The Conflicts of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel*
Principal Investigator and Supervisor *(if applicable)*	Sidney Shapiro with Dre Aurelie Lacassange
Is this a multi-year project? *(Yes/No)*	Yes
Date of original ethics approval	November 22, 2010
Date project completed *(if applicable)*	November 15, 2011
For incomplete projects, **tentative date of completion of project.**	
For incomplete projects, **date of next report** (no more than 1 year after this report)	
Date This Report Submitted	November 21, 2011

- *"Completed" means having terminated all contact with potential or actual participants for the purposes of the project, except for final feedback of the project's results.*

SECTION A – NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF PROJECT

1	How many subjects participated in the project?	17
2	Were some subjects removed from the study? • How many, and for what principal reason?	One subject was removed as a signed consent form was not able to be obtained
3	Did some subjects leave the study after they agreed to participate? • How many, and for what principal reason?	No
4	Specific issues or problems that arose (e.g., difficulty in recruiting, unexpected or serious events, ambiguities, etc) and how you handled them.	All participants who asked to be informed following the transcription of their interview were so informed as of November 15, 2011
5	How are you ensuring data security during storage?	All data is encrypted as per REB

SECTION B – REQUESTING TIME EXTENSIONS OR CHANGES TO A PROJECT

	Briefly describe the changes proposed. Please re-submit your full revised project to REB for evaluation, highlighting any changes in a different colour, and attach any new letters/forms that have been changed.	
6	• Time extension	
7	• Recruitment methods or types of participants	
8	• Procedures	
9	• Forms: letters, consent etc.	
10	• Other changes not listed above	

Signature of Principal Investigator	Date
Sidney Shapiro	Nov 21/11

Revised September 2010

Return by mail or email (PDF signature scan is acceptable) to the Research, Development and Creativity Office (L-313) on or before the date indicated for the final report on the original Ethics Approval Form.

Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THESIS

State and Religion

Date:

I am a student at Laurentian University in the School in the MA Sociology / Political Science program studying the intersection between the ultra-Orthodox population and the state of Israel. The study is intended to show potential methods for integration and societal advancement for the ultra-Orthodox segment of Israeli society. You should be aware that there are potential risks in revealing sensitive information regarding military service and social attitudes. The interview will be digitally recorded and will take approximately up to one hour.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study or about being a subject, I can be reached in Canada at 705-585-3199 and 08-914-4791 in Israel. In addition the Research Officer can be reached at (705) 675-1151, ext. 3213 for information.

Your identity will not be revealed at any time.

Researcher: Sidney Shapiro, Sociology MA student. This study is being conducted at Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada under the supervision of Professor Aurélie Lacassagne (alacassagne@laurentian.ca) and Professor Tim Nieguth (tnieguth@laurentian.ca).

What you will be asked to do in the Research: You will be asked a series of questions pertaining to religion, society, religious politics and demographic information.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question or choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researcher or nature of your relationship with Laurentian University either now, or in the future.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. If you decide to stop participating, you can do so without penalty. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher or Laurentian University. Should you decide to withdraw from the study; all data generated as a consequence of your participation will be destroyed.

Confidentiality: Unless you choose otherwise, interviews, notes and/or recording of the interview will not be associated with identifying information. You may refuse to answer any questions. All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and, unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only the researcher will have access to this information. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by Canadian law on privacy. In addition, your privacy and the confidentiality of your interview will be protected under Israeli law, to the full extent of your legal rights.

Note: Data from the research and interviews will be digitally stored in an encrypted format on a server located in the United States. Be aware that the government of the

United States may demand to see the data under the Patriot Act.

Questions about the Research: If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you can contact the principal researcher by email at sx_shapiro@laurentian.ca (email) or by phone at 705-585-3199 in Canada and 08-914-4791 in Israel. If you have questions or concerns pertaining to the ethics aspects of the study, you can contact the Jean Dragon Ph.D., ethics officer at LU at (705) 675-1151, ext. 3213 or write at *jdragon@laurentian.ca*

I agree to participate in this study, and I have received a copy of this consent form.	□
I would like to see the results prior to dissemination	□
I would like a copy of the study	□

Signature **Date**

Participant

Consent Form - Hebrew Translation

טופס הסכמה מודעת לתיזה

דת ומדינה

תאריך:

אני סטודנט באוניברסיטת לאורנטיאן בתוכנית המאסטרס בסוציולוגיה ומדעי המדינה, חוקר את הצומת שבין האוכלוסיה החרדית ומדינת ישראל. מטרת המחקר היא להציג שיטות פוטנציאליות של השתלבות והתקדמות חברתית של המגזר החרדי בחברה הישראלית. הריני מביא לידיעתך שקיימים סיכונים אפשריים בחשיפת מידע רגיש בנוגע לשירות צבאי וגישות חברתיות. הראיון יוקלט באופן דיגיטלי ויארך כשעה.

השתתפותך במחקר זה הינו התנדבותי לחלוטין. יש לך את הזכות להתחרט בכל עת ללא תוצאות.

אם יש לך שאלות או חששות בנוגע למחקר או להשתתפותך בו, ניתן להשיג אותי בקנדה בטלפון 705-585-3199 או בארץ בטלפון 08-914-4791. בנוסף, ניתן להשיג את ראש המחקר בטלפון 705-675-1151 שלוחה 3213 בכל עניין.

זהותך לא תיחשף כלל.

עורך המחקר: סידני שפירא, סטודנט M.A. בסוציולוגיה. מחקר זה נערך באוניברסיטת לאורנטיאן, סאדברי, אונטריו, קנדה, תחת פיקוחה של פרופסור אורלי לקסנג' (alacassagne@laurentian.ca) ופרופסור טים ניגות' (tnieguth@laurentian.ca).

מה שיידרש ממך במסגרת המחקר: תישאל סדרת שאלות המתייחסות לדת, חברה, פוליטיקה דתית ומידע דמוגרפי.

השתתפות בהתנדבות: השתתפותך במחקר היא התנדבותית לחלוטין והינך יכול לסרב לענות על כל שאלה או להפסיק את השתתפותך בכל עת. החלטתך לא להתנדב לא ישפיע על יחסיך עם עורך המחקר או על טיב יחסיך עם אוניברסיטת לאורנטיאן בהווה או בעתיד.

יציאה מהמחקר: הינך יכול לצאת מהחקר בכל עת, מכל סיבה שהיא, אם תחליט לעשות כן. אם תחליט להפסיק את השתתפותך במחקר, תוכל לעשות זאת ללא השלכות כלשהן. החלטתך להפסיק להשתתף או לסרב לענות על שאלה מסוימת, לא תשפיע על יחסיך עם עורך המחקר או עם אוניברסיטת לאורנטיאן. אם אכן תחליט לסגת, כל המידע שהתקבל כתוצאה מהשתתפותך, יושמד.

סודיות: אם לא תבקש אחרת, ראיונות, הערות ו/או הקלטות של הראיון לא יקושרו עם פרטים מזהים. תוכל לסרב לענות על כל שאלה. כל המידע שתספק במסגרת המחקר ישמר בסודיות מוחלטת, ואם לא תציין את הסכמתך בפירוש, שמך לא יופיע באף דוח או הוצאה של המחקר. הנתונים שלך יישמרו במתקן נעול ורק לעורך המחקר תהיה גישה למידע זה. סודיות תסופק בדרגה הגבוהה ביותר האפשרית תחת חוק הפרטיות הקנדי. בנוסף, פרטיותך וסודיות הראיון יובטחו תחת החוק הישראלי, באופן מלא מבחינת זכויותיך החוקיות.

הערה: נתונים מהמחקר ומהראיונות יישמרו באופן דיגיטלי בפורמט מקודד בשרת הנמצא בארה"ב. עליך לדעת שיתכן שממשלת ארה"ב תדרוש לראות את הנתונים האלה תחת החוק הפטריוטי.

שאלות בנוגע למחקר: אם יש לך שאלות או חששות בנוגע למחקר, ניתן להשיג את העורך הראשי של המחקר במייל: sx_shapiro@laurentian.ca או בטלפון: 3199-585-705 בקנדה ובטלפון: 08-914-4791 בארץ. אם יש לך שאלות או חששות בנוגע להיבטים האתיים של המחקר, ניתן ליצור קשר עם ד"ר ג'ין דרגון, קצינת האתיקה באוניברסיטת לאורנטיאן בטלפון: 1151-675-705 שלוחה 3213 או במייל: jdragon@lauentian.ca

אני מסכים להשתתף במחקר וקיבלתי עותק מטופס הסכמה זה	
אני מעוניין לראות את התוצאות לפני ההפצה	
אבקש לקבל העתק של המחקר	

Interview Script

Interview Questions for State and Religion:
The Conflicts of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel

Demographic Information

Name?
Age?
Sex?
Do you identify as being of Ashkenazi or Sephardi descent?
Were you born in Israel or did you immigrate[i]?
If immigrated to Israel, when and from where[ii]?
Where is your hometown in Israel?
How would you describe the community you are currently living in[iii]?

Religious Beliefs

What stream of Judaism do you identify with[iv]?
How would you define your religious beliefs[v]?
Do you associate yourself with a particular sect of Judaism[vi]?

Social-Religious Beliefs

What does being "American-Haredi (English speaking ultra-Orthodox)" mean?
Do "American-Haredi" people reflect the reality of the Haredi world?
Are there advantages or disadvantages associated with being able to speak other languages in the Haredi world?

Education

What type of primary education did you receive[vii]?
What subjects were the focus of your education?
Do you believe your education was sufficient?

What type of post-primary education did you receive[viii]?

Did you attend any other types of educational institutions (such as higher level religious institutions, university, college, vocational school etc.)?

Do you feel you have additional educational opportunities available to you[ix]?

In terms of education, how do you see yourself compared to the Haredi public?

Definitions and feelings of political and social terminology and their feelings

How would you define the following terms:

Toratam Omanutam[x]	Rabbinic Authority
Self Governance	*Halacha*[xi]
Religious Society	Social Assistance

Impressions of recent events involving the State and Religion:

1. What is your impression of the events surrounding the Jerusalem city government's decision in 2009/2010 to keep parking lots open on the Sabbath[xii]?

1a. Relate and describe the events that took place.
1b. Do you believe the controversy surrounding this issue was justified?
1c. Do you think there will be lasting repercussions following this incident?

2. What are your impressions of the State taking religious considerations into account when dealing with archeology[xiii]?

2a. Do you believe the controversy surrounding this issue is justified?

3. Describe the events surrounding the events in July 2009 pertaining to social workers accusing an ultra-Orthodox woman of child abuse[xiv].

3a. Do you believe the controversy surrounding this issue was justified?

4. What is your impression of the events surrounding the Supreme Court decision to desegregate a publicly funded school in Emmanuel[xv]?

4a. Do you believe the court treated the parties involved equally and considered all viewpoints?
4b. Do you think there will be lasting repercussions following this incident?
4c. Do you believe the controversy surrounding this issue was justified?

<u>Questions on Social, State, Military, and Employment issues:</u>
Is it a challenge to maintain religious identity in Israeli society?
What is the importance of marriage in religious society?
How would you define the timeline of the life of a typical ultra-Orthodox Jew living in Israel?
Are ultra-Orthodox members of society able to gain access to leadership roles?
What do you think should ideally happen to improve Israeli society?

What is your impression of the state of Israel?
How are the state and Judaism linked?
Given the current state of affairs, is the present situation viable long term?
Does the State provide the same level of religious freedom as other governments?
Do Ashkenazi and Sephardi members of society have equal access and potential?
Is ongoing debate over social assistance to ultra-Orthodox society justified?

Did you serve in the military, social or civilian service?

What is your opinion of the Tal Law?
Does mandatory military service pose a barrier to ultra-Orthodox Jews?
What is your opinion of military or national service programs geared towards the ultra-Orthodox population?

Generally, what is the current state of the job market in Israel?
Do religious members of society have the same access to jobs as members of secular society?
What can change in terms of employment training and opportunity?

Interview Script - Hebrew Translation

שאלון

דת ומדינה: הקונפליקטים של חרדים בישראל

מידע דמוגרפי

שם:

גיל:

מין:

האם את/ה מגדיר את עצמך כאשכנזי/ה או ספרדי/ה?

האם נולדת בארץ?

אם עלית, מאיפה ומתי?

מהו מקום מגוריך בארץ?

כיצד תגדיר/י את קהילתך הנוכחית?

אמונה יהודית

עם איזה זרם ביהדות את/ה מזדהה?

כיצד תגדיר/י את אמונותיך היהודיות?

האם את/ה משתייכ/ת למגזר יהודי מסוים?

אמונה חברתית-דתית

מה המשמעות של להיות "חרדי-אמריקאי" (חרדי דובר אנגלית)?

האם "חרדים אמריקאיים" משקפים את המציאות של העולם החרדי?

האם ישנם יתרונות או חסרונות הקשורים ליכולת לדבר שפות נוספות בעולם החרדי?

חינוך

איזה סוג של חינוך יסודי קיבלת?

באילו מקצועות התמקד החינוך שלך?

האם את/ה מאמינ/ה שהחינוך שקיבלת מספיק?

איזה סוג של חינוך על-יסודי קיבלת?

האם למדת במוסדות חינוך מסוג אחר (למשל מוסד דתי להשכלה גבוהה, אוניברסיטה, מכללה, בית ספר מקצועי וכדומה)?

האם את/ה מרגיש/ה שזמינים לך הזדמנויות חינוך נוספות?

בנוגע לחינוך, כיצד את/ה רואה את עצמך ביחס לציבור החרדי?

<u>הגדרות ורגשות בנוגע לטרמינולוגיה פוליטית וחברתית</u>

הגדר/י את המונחים הבאים:

תורתם אומנותם

רבנות

שלטון עצמי

הלכה

חברה דתית

סיוע חברתי

התרשמות מאירועים שהתרחשו לאחרונה הקשורים בדת ומדינה:

1. מהי התרשמותך מן האירועים הקשורים להחלטת עיריית ירושלים מ-2009-2010 לפתוח את החניונים בשבת?

1.א. התייחס/י ותאר/י את המאורעות שהתרחשו

1.ב. האם את/ה מאמינ/ה שהמחלוקת סביב עניין זה הייתה מוצדקת?

1.ג. האם את/ה חושב/ת שתהיינה השלכות ארוכות טווח למאורעות אלה?

2. מהי התרשמותך מן הדרך שבה המדינה לקחה בחשבון שיקולים דתיים בטיפול בחפירות ארכיאולוגיות?

2.א. האם את/ה מאמינ/ה שהמלוקת סביב עניין זה הייתה מוצדקת?

3. תאר/י את האירועים סביב אירועי יולי 2009 בנוגע לעובדים סוציאליים שהאשימו אשה חרדית בהתעללות בילדיה?

3.א. האם את/ה מאמינ/ה שחילוקי הדעות סביב נושא זה היו מוצדקים?

4. מהי התרשמותך מן האירועים סביב החלטת בית המשפט העליון לבטל את ההפרדה העדתית בבית ספר ציבורי בעמנואל?

4.א. האם את/ה מאמינ/ה שבית המשפט התייחס לצדדים באופן שוויוני ולקח בחשבון את כל הדעות?

4.ב. האם את/ה חושב/ת שהתהיינה השלכות ארוכות טווח למאורעות אלה?

4.ג. האם את/ה מאמינ/ה שהמחלוקת סביב עניין זה הייתה מוצדקת?

<u>שאלות בנוגע לנושאי חברה, מדינה, צבא ותעסוקה:</u>

האם זה מאתגר לשמר את הזהות הדתית בחברה הישראלית?

מהי חשיבות מוסד הנישואין בחברה הדתית?

כיצד תגדיר/י את ציר הזמן הטיפוסי של חרדי הגר בישראל?

האם לחרדים יש גישה לתפקידי מנהיגות?

מה לדעתך צריך לקרות כדי לשפר את החברה הישראלית באופן אידאלי?

מהי התרשמותך ממדינת ישראל?

כיצד קשורים המדינה והיהדות?

עם מצב העניינים הקיים, האם המצב הנוכחי הוא בר-קיימא לאורך זמן?

האם המדינה מספקת אותה רמה של חופש דת כמו ממשלות אחרות?

האם לאשכנזים ולספרדים גישה שווה ופוטנציאל שווה?

האם הדיון המתמשך בסיוע חברתי לחברה החרדית מוצדק?

האם שירתת בצבא, שירות לאומי, או שירות אזרחי?

מה דעתך על חוק טל?

האם שירות חובה מהווה מחסום עבור חרדים?

מה דעתך על שירות צבאי או שירות לאומי המותאמות לציבור החרדי?

באופן כללי, מהו המצב הנוכחי של שוק העבודה בישראל?

האם לדתיים יש את אותה גישה למשרות שיש לחילונים?

מה ניתן לשנות בנוגע להכשרה מקצועית והזדמנויות תעסוקה?

Appendix 3: Notes

Spellings, translations, and phonetic use of various words.

The thesis includes a wide range of foreign terms from Hebrew, Yiddish and other languages. The primary text seeks to maintain a consistency in the spelling and phonetic pronunciation of various words, generally using an Ashkenazi anglicized pronunciation for these foreign words. It is important to note that many non-English words used in the thesis, particularly those which come from secondary sources are preserved in their original form and therefore may very greatly in terms of spelling and emphasis on pronunciation within the terms. The glossary and explanation of terms section seeks to accommodate for these disparities and includes a number of entries which are linked to one another as to simplify the process of defining various terms and contents used throughout the thesis.

The Tal Law

As of February 21st 2012, when this document was being edited prior to submission, the Supreme Court has ruled against the perpetuation of the Tal Law and requires the government to establish an alternative framework by the summer (August) of 2012. This change marks a distinct break with the past decade and a half of tolerance for a policy, which in theory, I extended the status quo into the military/public service obligation arrangement, but in reality did very little to settle the ongoing conflicts between participation and nonparticipating members of Israeli society on the basis of religion. It is therefore uncertain than an alternative to the Tal Law will go any further to create new positioning points within the status quo arrangement governing state and religion relationships in Israeli Society.

Appendix 4: Glossary and Explanation of Terms

Note: Many terms are transliterated from Hebrew, Yiddish, or Aramaic and thus the spelling in English may vary considerably. Alternative transliterations are given in parentheses. Throughout the main text, terms appear as transliterated in specific quoted material.

achdus (also *achdut*): unity

aflayah: discrimination

Agudah: Ashkenazi Orthodox political movement founded in Katowice, Poland in 1912, officially known as World Agudath Israel, with branches in many countries. Its aims included the strengthening of Jewish institutions, particularly schools. As a Polish political party, it elected representatives to the Polish Sejm. After the establishment of the State of Israel, it reached an agreement with the secular state regarding some aspects of Jewish practice, and remains an important Orthodox political party with representation in the Knesset.

al regel achat: (lit., on one foot), to give a succinct interpretation

aliyah: (lit., going up), 1) traditional term for emigration to Israel; 2) in the synagogue service, it refers to the honor of being called to read a segment of the Torah portion; the segment itself is called an *aliyah*.

al shlosha devarim ha'olam omed: al ha'Torah, al ha'avodah, ve'al gemilut chasadim ("On three things does the world stand: on Torah [learning], on work [i.e., prayer], and on kind deeds."), saying from the Talmud, Pirkei Avot.

Am chofshi: a free people

Am kodshi: a holy people

amutah (pl. *amutot*): a non-profit charitable organization recognized under Israeli law.

Anochi Hashem Elokeicha, Lo yihiyeh lecha: the opening words of the first of the the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2 and Deuteronomy 5:6); "I am the LORD your God; you shall have no other gods before Me."

apikorsus: term originally derived from a misunderstood notion of the Greek Epicurean philosophical school. As used in Jewish circles, it refers to non-observance of, or disdain for Jewish law and practice. *Apikores*: (noun) term used in the Talmud for an apostate

arachim: values

aseh lecha rav: (lit., to make for oneself a rabbi), to chose and appoint a rabbi or rabbinic authority to guide one

Ashkelon: ancient coastal city in southern Israel

Ashkenaz: (lit., Germany), the region of northwestern Europe from which a major division of the Jews, with specific customs originated. Ashkenazi (adjective or noun); Ashkenazim (noun, plural), Jews from this cultural subgroup.

assur: forbidden according to Jewish law

Av melakhot: any of 49 primary types of work forbidden on the Sabbath, including such things as sowing, reaping, sewing, writing, etc. The types of work were those associated with building the tabernacle (*mishkan*) in the wilderness, all of which were suspended on the Sabbath. All other prohibitions of types of work on the Sabbath are derived from these main categories.

aveira, pl. *aveirot* (also *aveiras*): sins

avira de'ara'machkima: (Aramaic), the atmosphere in Israel is so holy that it causes one to be wiser

avodah: work; also used to refer to the formal Jewish prayer

Avraham Avinu (lit., our father Abraham): the biblical patriarch Abraham, considered the first Jew, and the first to proclaim belief in a single God.

baal teshuva (lit., master of returning): one who has taken on the Orthodox Jewish lifestyle and practice; sometimes called *hozer b'tshuva* (lit., returner to returning); See *tshuva.*

bachur, pl. *bachurim* (lit., chosen, firstborn): can refer to an eldest son, or colloquially to any male yeshiva student

Badatz: Hebrew acronym for Beit Din Tzedek (righteous court), an ultra-Orthodox body that handles matters according to a strict interpretation of Jewish law. It oversees, for example, divorce cases and offers kashrut certification.

bagrut: the Israeli high school matriculation exam.

Bais Yaakov (also Beit Yaakov; lit. House of Jacob): a system of schools and seminaries for Orthodox women founded in Kraków, Poland in 1917 by Sarah Shenirer. One of its main activities is teacher training for Orthodox schools.

Baka: a neighborhood of Jerusalem

*banu el mamenucha ve'el hanachala: (*idiom) we found peace and quiet (or we have finally settled).

Bar Ilan: Israeli public university founded in 1955 and located in Ramat Gan near Tel Aviv. As with all universities in Israel, it accepts students from all backgrounds. It has eight faculties: Exact Sciences, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, Jewish Studies, Medicine, Engineering, and Law. It is named for Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan (formerly Rabbi Meir Berlin), a religious Zionist leader. One of the aims of the university was to combine Jewish religious and secular studies.

Barkat, Nir (1959–): businessman and politician, mayor of Jerusalem (2008).

bar mitzvah (lit., son of the commandment): at the age of 13, Jewish boys take on adult religious responsibilities, and can be counted as part of a *minyan* (the quorum for public prayer). For girls, *bat mitzvah* takes place at age 12, since Jewish tradition held that girls mature somewhat earlier than boys.

Baruch Hashem (lit., blessed be the Name): a exclamation roughly equivalent to "thank God!" but used in a very general sense, often in response to the query, "how are you?"

Baruch she'amar (lit., blessed is the one who said...): a special blessing recited as part of the Torah reading in the synagogue service; it is recited for the one called to the Torah.

basar v'chalav (lit., meat and milk): Jewish law prohibits the mixing of meat and milk products, hence the meaning of combining two things or ideas that should not be together. Also can refers to "illegitimate" mixing.

Bayit veGan (lit., home and garden): a neighborhood in Jerusalem

b'davka: purposefully

bechirah chofshit: freedom of choice (free will)

Be'er Sheva: a city in Southern Israel.

be'etzem: actually

bein adam la-chavero (lit., between a man and his fellow): describes interpersonal relationships

bein adam la-Makom (lit., between a man and the Place): HaMakom is a poetic way of referring to God, so this means between a man and his Maker.

Beis Din (also *Beit Din*, lit. house of judgment): rabbinical court

Beit Hamikdash: the Temple in Jerusalem

Beitar: a Revisionist Zionist youth movement founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky in Riga, Latvia in 1923; also, a soccer team

Beitar Illit: an ultra-Orthodox suburb of Jerusalem

Belz: a town in Western Ukraine near the Polish border that was home to a major Hasidic dynasty.

Ben Gurion, David (1886–1973): Zionist leader and first Prime Minister of Israel

ben-Torah (lit., son of the Torah): an observant Jew

Ben Yehuda, Eliezer (1858–1922): lexicographer and newspaper editor who worked tirelessly to revive Hebrew as a modern spoken language.

Bereishit (lit., in, or with, the beginning): the first word of the Bible; also, the book of Genesis

bikur cholim (lit., visiting the sick): the good deed of visiting the sick; it also is the name of a nineteenth-century Jerusalem hospital.

Binyamin: the youngest son of the patriarch Jacob

Bituach Leumi (lit., national insurance): Israeli office for welfare, disability, and pension payments.

Bnei Brak: an ancient town in central Israel with a majority ultra-Orthodox population.

bnei hayeshiva: (lit., sons of the Yeshiva) Yeshiva student

bracha m'zonot: a short grace after eating a light meal that includes grains, but does not include bread

Breslov: a Ukrainian town that was home to Rabbi Nachman, founder of the Breslov Hasidic dynasty.

bris (also *brit*; lit., covenant): any type of covenant, but often used as a short form for *brit milah*, the ritual circumcision of Jewish boys at eight days of age.

Brisker Rav: the traditional head of the Brisker yeshivas, associated with the Soloveitchik dynasty that originated in Brest-Litovsk, Belarus.

Bucharest: Capital of Romania

burqa (Arabic): a garment worn by Muslim women which covers the entire body and the face.

Carlebachi: a follower of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach (1925–1994), a rabbi and musician whose followers established Mevo Modiim in central Israel.

Chabad (acronym of *chachma-binah-daat*: wisdom-undertanding-knowledge), the movement founded by the Hasidic Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1812); today a major worldwide Jewish outreach organization. Chabadnik: a follower of this tradition.

chavurah (also chaburah): a movement of informal groups organized for Jewish prayer, learning, and celebration.

chachamim (also *hakhamim*; lit., wise ones), respected religious teachers, sages

chag (also *hag*; religious holiday; "*chag same'ach*" happy holiday

chametz products containing leavening, whose use is forbidden during Passover

charedi (pl., *charedim*; also *haredi*, *hareidi*) ultra-Orthodox Jews strictly observant of Jewish law and religious practices.

chas v'shalom, (lit., protecting and peace), an exclamation similar to God forbid!

chavrusa (also *chavruta*, *havruta*), a study partner, especially in yeshiva

chayal (m.; fem., *chayelet*), a soldier

Chazal (acronym for *chachamim zichronim l'vracha*, "our sages of blessed memory"), the ancient sages who laid the foundation for normative Judaism in late Roman times.

Chazon Ish: Rabbi Avroham Yeshaya Karelitz (1878–1953), the author of a book by that title. Born in Kosava (now Brest Voblast, Belarus), he emigrated to Palestine in 1933, and became a leading haredi scholar based in Bnei Brak.

chesed: lovingkindness

chillul Hashem (also *hillul Hashem*; lit., desecration of the Name): any act that would appear to damage God's reputation, or bring disgrace upon religious practice, e.g., smoking on the Sabbath (see *chillul Shabbat*)

chiloni (also *hiloni*, pl. *chilonim*): a person who does not observe Jewish practices, a secular Jew

chinuch (also *hinuch*): education, especially religious education for children

chochma: wisdom

Chafetz Chaim: Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan Poupko (1838–1933), called after his book of that title. He was a prolific author on Jewish law, notably the *Mishneh Berurah*, and gave his approval to the establishment of the Bais Yaakov school system for women. He was also a leading figure in the Agudath Israel movement for Orthodox Jews. See Bais Yaakov; Aguda.

chol hamoed Pesach intermediate days of Passover on which some kinds of activity and work are permitted

chumra: stringency

chutz la'aretz (also *hutz la'aretz*): any place outside of Israel

chutznik, pl. *chutznikim:* living abroad, someone who does not live in the place

da'at Torah (lit., knowledge of Torah): the perspective, view or opinion of the Torah

dafka or *davka:* on purpose

dati (f. *datiya*): a religiously observant person

Dati-Leumi: National Religious Party (Mafdal) in Israel, formed in 1956 and representing the religious Zionist movement. See Rav Kook.

daven, *davening*: to pray, prayer

David Hamelech: King David

dayan, pl. *dayanim*: judges, especially in religious courts

demokratiah: democracy

derech, *derech eretz* (lit., way, way of the land): courtesy, politeness

Edot Hamizrach: non-Ashkenazi Jewish subgroups, that is, Sephardim, Morrocans, Yemenites, etc.

Egel hazahav: the biblical Golden Calf; see Exodus 32

eidelkeit (Yiddish): purity of spirit, beyond "refinement ... fineness" (Dobroszycki and Gurock, 1993, p.197)

Eilat: the southernmost city of Israel on the Gulf of Aqaba

eiruv (also *eruv*): a boundary made according to Jewish law, which allows persons within it to carry objects on the Sabbath

Elyashiv, Rav: Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyshaiv (ca. 1910-2012), an Ashkenazi rabbi, leader and rabbinical authority

emunah: faith

Eretz Israel (also Eretz Yisrael): the Land of Israel

erev chag, *erev Shabbat:* the eve of a holy day or Sabbath; holy days begin at sunset.

fressor (Yiddish):

frum (Yiddish): religiously observant; *frumkeit* is religious observance

gadol hador (lit., great one of the generation): any leading Torah luminary.

galus (also *galut*): exile

gashmius (also *gashmiut*): worldliness

Gaza (also ’Aza): coastal territory formerly under Egyptian control, administered by Israel from 1967 to 2005, at which time Jewish settlements were evacuated and the area came under the Palestinian Authority, then Hamas.

gedarim: fences, enclosures

gedolim (lit., great ones): leading Torah scholars

gemach (pl. *gemachim*): charitable funds used for non-interest loans and other forms of welfare

Gemara: part of the Oral Torah

gemilut chasadim: kind deeds

Ger: one of the notable Hasidic dynasties

goy, pl. *goyim* (lit. nation, nations): any non-Jewish nation or people; *goyish*, of or pertaining to non-Jewish nations and cultures

Gruzini: someone originating from Gruzia (Georgia, formerly part of the Soviet Union).

Gut Yom Tov (Yiddish): Happy Holy Day

Haaretz: the leading liberal (Left) newspaper in Israel

Hadassah: American Jewish women's Zionist organization founded in 1912

hafganah, pl. *hafganot*: street demonstration

Haifa: large industrial city located on the coast of northern Israel next to Acre

HaKadosh Baruch Hu (lit., the Holy One, blessed be He): God

halacha (pl. *halachot*; also *Halacha*, *halakhot*): laws of the Jewish legal system

halacha grada: simply the Jewish law, the Jewish law alone

Hamachon Hacharedi: the Haredi Institute

ha-motzi (lit. he who brings forth"): refers to the blessing recited when one eats bread, blessing God, "who brings forth bread from the earth."

Har Nof: a haredi neighborhood in Jerusalem.

Har Sinai: Mount Sinai, the site of the biblical revelation to the ancient Israelites

haredization: the process of becoming more strictly observant of Jewish law and practice in neighborhoods whose population is increasingly haredi

HaShabbat. Eifo tihiyi bashabbat? Eich bilit et hashabbat? The Sabbath. Where will you (f) be for the Sabbath? How did you (f) spend the Sabbath?

Hashem (lit., the Name): a common way of referring to God, derived from the four-letter Name of God in the Torah, which is not pronounced; in Jewish prayers, this name is read as "Adonai"; in English Bibles, it is often printed as "LORD."

Hashkafa: view or perspective

Hasidic, Hasidism, Hasid (lit., "pious"): today refers to the popular spiritual movement that arose in 18th-century Eastern Europe, whose founder, Israel Baal Shem Tov, emphasized fervent, ecstatic prayer, as opposed to the predominent emphasis on scholarship. The movement initially faced bitter opposition. See *mitnagdim*.

Hasidic Rebbe: the often charismatic leader of any branch of Hasidim, or the descendant of the founder of a particular dynasty. The Rebbe is frequently credited with miraculous acts or unique spiritual and psychological insight.

hasidische: of, or pertaining to the Hasidim

Haturim and Malchei Yisrael: an intersection (in a religious neighborhood) between two streets in Jerusalem

hatzlacha: success

Hebrew: 1) a Jew; 2) the language of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible, Old Testament) and historic Jewish literature; re-established in the twentieth century as a modern spoken language that is the offical language of the State of Israel.

Hebrish: English spoken with the addition of many Hebrew terms and phrases

hechsher: certification that a food product is kosher and acceptable under Jewish law

Herzl, Theodor (1860–1904): Viennese journalist who founded the World Zionist Organization

Hesder yeshiva: a post-high school institution for Torah study in which the participants also serve in the IDF.

Hidabroot: a dialogue

hilkhot shavuot: regulations of Jewish law for the observance of the holy day of Shavuot (Pentecost)

hilkhot sukka: regulations of Jewish law concerning the erection of a sukkah and the observance of the week-long holiday

hiloni (pl. *hilonim*; also *chilonim*): secular Jews, that is, those who do not fully observe Jewish law and ritual practice

Hirsch, Rabbi Shimshon Raphael (1808–1888): prominent figure of 19th-century German Orthodoxy and commentator. He is often considered the founder of Modern Orthodoxy.

hishtadlut (also *hishtadlus*): intercession

Histadrut (HaHistadrut haklalit shel HaOvdim be'Eretz Yisrael, General Federation of Laborers in the Land of Israel): organization of trades unions, founded in 1920 under the British Mandate.

ikar: the main point, especially of an argument

Intifada (Arabic, "casting off"): either of the two periods of terror attacks initiated by the Palestinians, 1987–1993 and 2000–2005.

Ir Hakodesh (lit., Holy City): Jerusalem

Iriyat Yerushalayim: the Jerusalem city governing board and its attendant bureaucracy

Issur: forbidden under Jewish law or a prohibition under Jewish law

Issur v'heter: forbidden, but for which one may receive a loosening or leniency (*heter*) of the Halacha in order to perform an act.

Iyar: the eighth month of the Hebrew lunar calendar, corresponding to April–May.

Kaddish: an important prayer praising God which is recited with a minyan as part of the Jewish daily prayers. It is also recited for the dead, hence it is also sometimes called the mourners' prayer.

kadosh: holy

Karo (or Caro), Rabbi Joseph (1488–1575): Spanish rabbi and codifier of Jewish Law, who eventually settled in Palestine and is buried in Safed.

kashrut (also *kashrus*): pertaining to the requirements of Jewish law regarding foods. It includes rules concerning the humane slaughter of permitted animals; the prohibition of certain animals, birds, fish, and other creatures; and a strict prohibition on mixing meat and milk products or utensils used for them. See also *hechsher*, *shochet*, and *mashgiach*.

Katamon: a neighborhood of Jerusalem

kavod: respect

kedushah: holiness; see also *kadosh*

kibbutz (pl. kibbutzim): a type of communal, mainly agricultural, settlement developed in the late nineteenth century in which members work in communally-owned businesses and share profits equally.

Kiddush: the blessing made over wine and/or bread at the beginning of and during the Sabbath and Holy Days; can refer to other types of blessings, for example, *kiddush levana*, a blessing on the New Moon.

kiddush hachodesh: a ritual of blessing the beginning of each Hebrew lunar month. The time of the arrival the coming Hebrew month is announced during the Sabbath synagogue prayers.

kiddush Hashem (lit., sanctification of the Name): often used to refer to martyrdom of Jews attacked by non-Jews.

kippa (also *kippah*): the head covering worn by observant Jewish men; also called *yarmulke* (Yiddish).

kippah serugah: a type of crocheted head covering used by some Jewish men; it often identifies them as modern Orthodox or from a Zionist community

kiruv: outreach; the effort by many synagogues and organizations to encourage Jews to become more knowledgeable and observant of Judaism.

Kiryat Hayovel: a neighborhood of Jerusalem

kivyachol: so to speak, as it were, hypothetically

kizvat yeladim: a type of welfare payment for child support made through the National Insurance Institute. See *Bituach Leumi*.

Klal Yisrael (lit., all Israel): the Jewish community as a whole

Klausenberger: member of the Hasidic sect Sanz-Klausenberg that originated in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam (1927–1994) was head of the movement, which has centres in Boro Park, New York; Kiryat Sanz, Netanya Israel; Jerusalem, and other places.

Knesset (lit. assembly): the Israeli parliament

kochi v'otzem yadi: (from Deuteronomy 8:17) My strength and power.

kol hakavod (lit., all honor [to you]): a phrase praising someone for an action.

kollel: an organization for advanced Torah study; often for married men, often providing a small stipend

Kook, Rav Abraham Isaac (1865–1935): First Chief Rabbi of Palestine appointed by the British. A noted scholar, poet, mystic and philosopher, he was an ardent supporter of the Jews' return to settle in the Land of Israel

kosher: suitable for Jews to eat. See also *kashrut, hechsher, mashgiach*

Kotel (also Kotel Hamaaravi, Western Wall, Wailing Wall): the Herodian retaining wall of the Temple Mount; Jews gather to pray in the large plaza by this wall.

Kupat Cholim: generally, any health maintenance organization, but mainly it refers to Kupat Cholim Klali, one the earliest of these organizations.

Lau, Rabbi Yisrael Meir (1937–): Polish-born rabbi and Holocaust survivor who was elected Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi in 1993.

lechatchila: from the beginning

lein (Yiddish, to read): the formal reading of the Torah or other biblical texts, using the system of tropes and chant

leshem shamayim (lit., in the name of heaven): for the sake of heaven

Leumi (lit., national)

Lihiyot am chofshi b'artzenu: "to be a free people in our land"

limudei chol: secular studies, including mathematics, science, literature, etc.; non-Torah learning

limudei kodesh (lit., holy studies): Jewish studies, including Torah, Tanakh, Jewish law, ethics, etc.

Litvish (Yiddish, lit. "Lituanian"): refers historically to those who followed the Torah scholars based in the great yeshivot of Lithuania, especially in Vilna. It also refers to non-hasidic rabbis and schools of thought; many of the earliest opponents of the hasidic movement were from the Lithuanian yeshivot.

luach: tablet; can refer to a bulletin board, a timetable, or the tablet of the Ten Commandments

Lubavitch: another name for the Chabad hasidim. See Chabad.

Luchot ha'Brit (lit., tablets of the Covenant; also *shnei luchot habrit*, two tablets of the Covenant): tablets of the Ten Commandments, especially as a decorative element in synagogues

Maccabi: one of the major health maintenance organizations in Israel; the Hasmoneans who opposed the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes; sports teams (basketball) of that name

machmir: strict

Machon Gold: a women's seminary and yeshiva Jerusalem.

Machon Lev: a Jerusalem yeshiva and high technology school

macrocosm: the entire world or universe

Malha: a neighborhood in Jerusalem; can also refer to a large mall in Jerusalem

mamash: really

mamzer, pl. *mamzerim*, commonly, a bastard. In Jewish law it refers only to someone born of an incestuous or adulterous relationship. A known mamzer can never be counted as a Jew and can only marry a woman who is also a *mamzera*.

mamzerut: the condition of being a *mamzer*

mas hakhnasah: income tax

mashgiach (pl. *mashgichim*): a kashrut inspector. Restaurants, hotels, educational institutions, the army, and food manufacturers employ *mashgichim* to certify that food and equipment meet the requirements of *kashrut*.

Mashiach (also Moshiach): the Messiah

Masorati (also, *mesorati*, lit. traditional): the Conservative movement in Israel

mat'im: suitable, compatible

mazal tov (lit. a good star):, 1) the exclamation on hearing about a joyful event, such as future marriage, birth of a baby, success of any sort. It can also be used as a noun to signify any happy event.

Mea Shearim (also Meah She'arim; lit. one hundred gates): Jerusalem neighborhood founded outside the Old City in the nineteenth century; it is home to ultra-Orthodox Jews, including sects that do not recognize the State of Israel.

mechalel Shabbos: deeds that break the sanctity of the Sabbath

medina (also medinah): a state

Medinat Yisrael: the State of Israel

mehadrin: kosher according to the strictest standards, usually referring to food products

meikil: (Hebrew and Yiddish) lenient

merakezet: secretary, manager

mercaz kehilati: community centre

mesorah: tradition. See Masorati movement.

meyased: founder

mezuzah, pl. *mezuzot*: small containers placed on the doorposts of Jewish homes that contain a parchment with bibical verses, including *Sh'ma Yisrael*, the Jewish statement of belief in one God.

microcosm: a small system that is analogous to a larger system

midbar: wilderness or desert

Midrash: part of the Oral Torah, including stories and interpretations of the biblical text.

miktzo'i: professional

minhagim: customs. Various Jewish subgroups have particular customs which are recognized as valid for those communities, but not, strictly speaking, part of Jewish Law applicable to all communities. An example is the custom of Sephardi Jews to eat rice during the Passover holiday, which Ashkenazi Jews do not permit.

Misrad Hapnim: Israeli Ministry of the Interior, which oversees citizenship, and provides identity cards, passports, and visas, among other services.

mitnagdim (opponents): those who opposed the Hasidic movement.

mitzva (also *mitzvah*, pl. *mitzvot*, *mitzvoth*, *mitzvos*): biblical commandments; sometimes used in the sense of a "good deed," as in "it's a mitzva to visit the sick."

Mizrahi: (also Mizrachi; lit. eastern or Oriental): 1) refers to Jews from mainly Arabic-speaking areas, such as North Africa, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, etc. 2) a religious Zionist movement founded in 1902 aiming to recruit Orthodox Jews to the Zionist cause

Modern Orthodox: a broad-spectrum movement that encourages Orthodox Jews to observe Jewish law and practices, while integrating into the modern world. This is in contrast to the ultra-Orthodox and Hasidic sects who tend to remain outside the mainstream.

Modi'in Illit: an ultra-Orthodox city in central Israel, also known as "Kiryat Sefer."

morah de'asra: (Aramaic, lit. the master of the city) the main leader, which is used to refer to the main leader or rabbi

Moshe Rabbenu (lit. Moses our Teacher): Moses, the traditional author of the Torah

mossad (lit. institution): any organization, but with a capital M refers to the external Israeli intelligence service.

Nachal Charedi: an army combat unit that incorporates ultra-Orthodox men.

Nahalat Shiv'a: a neighborhood of Jerusalem

Ner Yisroel: (lit. the light of Israel) can also refer to a large yeshiva movement

neshamah: soul

Netanyahu, Binyamin, (1949–), Israeli politician, twice prime minister of Israel representing the Likud Party.

Neturei Karta (lit. guardians of the wall): an ultra-Orthodox sect that does not recognize the State of Israel, has "diplomatic" relations with the Palestinian Authority, and whose members are sometimes seen in demonstrations worldwide against the State of Israel.

noch a mol (Yiddish): again, another time

Olam chesed yibaneh: deeds that in their merit, the world exists; a kind world will be built

Olam HaZeh (lit. this world), the world, our times

Old City: the historic centre of Jerusalem within the ancient walls

olim: derived from *aliya*, refers to those who have immigrated to Israel.

Oral Torah: Traditional body of literature of equal weight with the Tanakh. Includes the Mishnah, Gemara, and Midrash.

Orthodox: Jews who follow Jewish law and practice, at varying degrees of strictness, but certainly including Sabbath observance, kashrut, and Halacha.

otzar (lit. treasure, treasury)

parashah: a portion of the Torah, which is divided into 54 segments with one or two being formally read during the synagogue service on Sabbaths, Holy Days, and on Mondays and Thursdays.

parnassa (also *parnassah*): livelihood, earning a living

pasken: to give a halakhic ruling; see *posek, poskei hador*

pasuk: a verse of the Bible

Pat b'melach tochel v'mayim b'msurah tishteh v'al ha'aretz tishan: (Ethics of the Fathers (Avot) 6:4) Eat bread with salt, drink water sparingly, and sleep on the land. A directive to live in moderation and not to excess.

Pesach: Passover, the spring holiday commemorating the exodus from Egypt, during which no leavened products are eaten

Pindrus, Yitzchak: Haredi Jerusalem City Council member representing the Degel HaTorah party.

Pirkei Avot (lit. chapters of the fathers): a tractate of the Mishneh containing succinct sayings on ethics and morals.

Porat Yosef Torah: a Sephardic yeshiva in Jerusalem

poskei hador: rabbis considered the greatest of a generation in deciding halakhic matters.

posek: a rabbi qualified to decide halakhic questions

protektzia: a Russian term indicating "protection" or special consideration, for example, in hiring, or in dealing with the bureaucracy

psak: a halakhic decision, also *psak Halacha*

Purim: the spring holiday that recalls the story of the bibical Esther who rescued the Jews of Persia from the machinations of Haman. Holiday observances include hearing the reading of the Book of Esther, wearing costumes, and drinking.

rabbanim (also *rabbonim, rebbeim*): rabbis

Rabbanut: the rabbinate of Israel

Rabbanut HaTzva'i: the rabbinate for the IDF

rabbinic authority

Rabbinic Judaism: post-Exilic Judaism, particularly as it developed in late Roman times, becoming the normative Orthodox Judaism of today

rachmanim: those who are merciful

Ramat Beit Shemesh: town in central Israel

Rambam: Acronym for Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (d. 1204), the most prominent Spanish rabbi, philosopher, physician, and legal authority of the middle ages.

rav: rabbi

Rav HaRashi (also Rav Hareishi): the chief rabbi

Rechov Malchei Yisrael: a thoroughfare in Jerusalem

Rema (also Remuh): Rabbi Moshe ben Israel Isserles (ca. 1520–1572), a noted halakhic authority, and founder of a major yeshiva. His synagogue and grave can be visited in Kraków.

resha'im: evildoers

Rosh Hashanah (lit. head of the year): the Jewish New Year, which occurs in the fall (September–October), and ushers in the ten-day period of repentence and self-examination that ends on Yom Kippur.

ruchnius, (also *ruchniyus*, *ruchniyot*), spirituality, especially joyful spirituality

Sabbath (also Shabbat): the seventh day of the week, on which religious Jews do not work, handle money, or do many everyday tasks.

sabbatical: refers to the seventh year, in which crops are not planted or harvested. Called *shemittah* in Hebrew.

sabra: a type of cactus with a sweet edible fruit. Used to refer to Israelis who were supposedly tough on the outside, but sweet in the inside.

Safra Square: the plaza in front of the Jerusalem Municipality building

Sanhedria: an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Jerusalem; the tombs of members of the Sanhedrin are in this neighborhood.

Sanhedrin: a governing body for Jewish life, especially as it was set up during Roman rule.

Schneller: an army base and historic compound located in a religious neighborhood in Jerusalem

secular Jews: see *chilonim, hilonim*

Sefer Torah: the specially-prepared text of the Torah on parchment, read during the synagogue services on Sabbaths, Holy Days, Mondays and Thursdays.

se'if: article, clause, or paragraph of a document

Sephardi (of or pertaining to Spain [Sepharad]): one of the main cultural branches of Judaism; Jews of Spanish heritage, with particular customs and halakhic principles. Because of the expulsion of Jews from Spain either during Muslim times or under Christian rulers in 1492, Sephardi Jews are found throughout the world.

Sha'ar Shechem (Shechem Gate): one of the gates in the Old City walls of Jerusalem; also known as the Damascus Gate. The highway originally leading out of that gate ran through Shechem, and went on to Damascus.

Shabak: acronym for Shirut Bitahom Klalit (general security service, GSS, or Shin Bet) the Israeli internal intelligence service

Shabbat (also Shabbos, shabbes): the seventh day of the week. Religiously observant Jews do not work, shop, handle money, or cook, among other things, on that day. A day of rest, relaxation, and joy.

Shach, Rabbi Eliezer (1898–2001):ultra-Orthodox scholar, head of the Ponevezh yeshiva and influential in Israeli politics; He formed the Ashkenazi political party Degel HaTorah in 1988; he is opposed to Zionism.

Shas: Shomrei Torah Sephardim (Sephardi Torah Guardians) a political party for Jews of North African and Mizrachi descent which unexpectedly made major gains in Knesset representation in 1999.

sheitel (Yiddish): a wig, used by married Orthodox women of some sects to cover their natural hair

shekel (also sheqel; lit. weight): the unit of currency used in both ancient and modern Israel

Shira Chadasha (lit., a new song): may also refer to an egalitarian Orthodox synagogue in Jerusalem and a corresponding movement

shiryonim: those serving in the armored corps.

shiurim: lessons or lectures, particularly Torah learning

Shiviti Hashem L'negdi Tamid: Psalm 16:8, "I have the Lord continually before me."

shlep, shlepping (Yiddish): carry, used in the sense of carrying a burden, even a psychological burden, for some distance.

shalom bayis (lit. peace in the house; also *shalom bayit*): a home without strife or argument, the maintenance of which is considered a religious duty. Couples in divorce court are often required to attend the Shalom Bayit Committee before the court will consider their petition for divorce.

Shlomo Hamelech (lit., Shlomo the King): King Solomon, the son of the biblical King David

shmirat Shabbat (lit. guarding or keeping the Sabbath): observing the Sabbath day according to Orthodox norms

Shmuel Hanavi (lit. the prophet Samuel): 1) the biblical prophet Samuel; 2) a neighborhood in Jerusalem; 3) the traditional tomb of the prophet Samuel located on the outskirts of Jerusalem

Shoah: another term for the Holocaust

shochet (pl. *shochtim*): someone qualified to slaughter animals according the rules concerning *kashrut*. *Shechitah* is the practice of slaughtering according to Jewish law.

shofar: the ram's horn, used in biblical times to call men together for battle or public events; today used as a call to repentence and prayer during the month of Elul and the High Holy Day period (Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur).

shtadlan: intercessor

shtadlanut: intercession, pleading, lobbying

shtetl (Yiddish): a village, mostly associated with villages of Eastern Europe, some of which had a Jewish majority up to the period of World War II.

shtreimel (Yiddish): the elegant flat fur hats worn mainly by Hasidic Jews on holy days and special occasions.

shul (Yiddish): a synagogue

Shulchan Aruch (lit., prepared table): the compendium of authoritative Jewish Law published by Rabbi Joseph Karo in 1565 CE.

Shushan: the capital of Persia in which the Purim story takes place.

simcha (pl. *simchot, simchas*): joy; it loosely refers to any joyous occasion of a Jewish nature, such as weddings, brit milah,

Simchat Beit Hashoeivah: During the existence of the Temple in Jerusalem, there was a special drawing of water from the Shiloach spring which was poured over the altar during the festival of Sukkot, an occasion of great joy. A remembrance of this ceremony is celebrated by some Hasidic sects.

sinat chinam: baseless hatred, traditionally one of the spiritual causes that led to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem

Slonim Hasidim: a Hasidic dynasty originating in Slonim, Belarus in the early 19th century. There are two branches of the dynasty in Israel; virtually all of the Eastern European Slonimer hasidim were murdered in the Holocaust.

Soloveitchik, Rabbi Joseph Dov (1903–1992): leading U.S. rabbinic scholar and philosopher.

sukka (also *sukkah*): the temporary dwelling erected for the 7-day feast of Sukkoth, reminding Jews of their wanderings in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt.

Sukkot: the fall holiday lasting eight days, commemorating the wanderings of the Jews in the desert

Tachanun: plea, supplication; part of the Jewish daily prayers

Tachlis (Hebrew/Yiddish): straight to the point, the essence of the matter

Tal Law: a law passed by the Israeli Knesset in 2002 (and which will expire in July 2012 unless extended by the Knesset) which allowed ultra-Orthodox men to serve a shortened term in the IDF. The law remains controversial, although it has had some success in bringing about increased ultra-Orthodox enlistment.

Talmid chacham (lit. wise student): any prominent yeshiva student

Talmud: the "Oral Torah" that consists of Midrash, Mishna, and Gemara, which originated as oral discussions and was recorded under the authority of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi in the fifth century, CE. Two versions exist, the Babylonian and Jerusalem (the latter was completed in the fourth century).

talmudei Torah: Orthodox grade school system that emphasizes Torah learning alongside mandatory secular subjects.

talmudic: of, or pertaining to the Talmud; can loosely refer to a type of logic that is convoluted and focussed on detail

Tanach (also Tanakh): the Hebrew Scriptures or Bible. The acronym stands for Torah (the five books of Moses); Nevi'im (the prophets); and ketuvim (the writings, including Psalms, Proverbs, and other books). In Christian Bibles, the Tanakh is called the Old Testament, and the books are printed in an order differing from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Tartarean: Literary term of or relating to Tartarus; infernal; from to Greek Mythology, the abysmal regions below Hades where the Titans were confined. (Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster, et al., p. 439 1984)

Teddy Kollek, the legendary mayor of Jerusalem, who was responsible for much of its development and good relations between its residents

tefillin: phylacteries; small black leather boxes with long straps that are tied onto the forehead and usually the left arm by Jewish men during prayer. The boxes contain specific verses from the Torah, and the practice derives from the biblical commandment (Exodus 11-16).

Tehillim: the book of Psalms

Teimani (also Temani), Yemenite Jew

Tel Aviv, Israel's largest city located on the Mediterranean coast next to Jaffa.

tfassim: lit. forms

theocracies: governments based on religious law.

Torah: 1) the five books of Moses in the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy); 2) the way of life practiced by Jews, encompassing the laws and philosophy derived from the Torah

Torah im Derech Eretz:

Torah sheba'al peh (lit. oral Torah): see Talmud

torasam umanusam (also Toratam Omanutam) (lit. Torah is their vocation); "It describes the ideal of the contemporary ultra-Orthodox: Learning is seen as a calling to be pursued singlemindedly by all (males, that is)". (Efron, 2003, p.62)

tov me'od: very good

treif (Yiddish): food that is unsuitable for use by Jews. Can also refer to anything that is forbidden or contrary to Jewish practice, or meat from animals that are kosher, but have not been slaughtered according to Jewish Law.

tshuva (lit. returning): 1) returning to religious practice, in the sense of repentance; 2) a response to a question.

tsnius (also *tzniut*), modesty; often it refers to dressing in modest clothing, including married women covering their hair

tumah: "unclean" in the biblical sense of a taboo, restricting one from associating with holy places, activities, meals, and sacred objects. Certain vessels or houses can also become *tameh* (unclean). In most cases, the condition is time-limited and is eliminated afterwards by ritual bathing in a *mikveh*. Being "unclean" is not related to sin.

tzad ha'shaveh (lit. an equal side*)*

tzadikim: the righteous; can also refer to Jewish sages of old

Tzahal: abbreviation for Tzevah Haganah L'Israel, Israel Defense Forces, IDF

tzanhanim (Hebrew): the paratroops of the IDF

tzanua: modesty. See *tzniut.*

tzedaka (lit. righteousness): in common use, it refers to any charity, or the giving of charitable donations

ultra-Orthodox: Jews who are exceptionally strict in their observance of Jewish law. Because of this they often self-segregate

u'malah ha'aretz de'at Hashem k'mayim layam m'chasim (Isaiah 11:9): The land will be filled with knowledge of God just as the ocean is filled with water.

u'mitzvot: and commandments (good deeds)

Upsherin (Yiddish): the joyful ceremony of giving a three-year-old boy his first haircut.

Via Dolorosa: a short route in the Old City of Jerusalem that traces the path of Jesus from his condemnation by Pilate to his crucifixion. The fourteen "stations" were developed in the Middle Ages by Christian pilgrims.

Weltanschauung (German): worldview

Yad Sarah: a charitable organization that makes medical equipment available on loan.

Yafo (also Yaffo): the ancient port of Jaffa, now part of the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality.

Yahadut: Judaism

yarmulke (Yiddish): a skullcap worn by Jewish men. See *kippa*.

yatzah secharo behefsedo: (Hebrew idiom) he lost more than he gained.

Yemenite: a Jew from Yemen; see Temani

yemot HaMashiach: the days of the Messiah

Yerushalayim (Hebrew): Jerusalem

Yerushalmi-Charedi: ultra-Orthodox Jerusalemite

yeshiva (pl. *yeshivot*): an institution of Jewish learning. Can include all levels from grade school through advanced postgraduate studies. *yeshivish* of or pertaining to the yeshiva lifestyle and ways of thinking.

Yid (pl. Yidden; slang) a Jew

Yiddish: a language based on medieval German and Hebrew, used throughout the Ashkenazi Jewish world. Today it includes loan words from many languages of countries where Jewish communities thrived. Among some ultra-Orthodox Jews, Yiddish is the language of everyday discourse, Hebrew being reserved for prayer and Torah study. The vibrant Yiddish culture in prewar Eastern Europe included secular literature, plays, film, music, and journalism.

Yiddishkeit (Yiddish): all of Jewish culture, including religious observance.

yirat shamayim (also *yirat shomayim*) "fear(or awe) of heaven"; *yirei shomayim* those who fear or are in awe of heaven; those who try to attain holiness in their daily lives.

Yitzchak (also Yitzhak): the son of Abraham and Sarah.

Yizkor (lit. will remember): the anniversary of a death; the ritual prayers of remembrance; the synagogue service with a minyan to say kaddish for the departed.

Yom Ha'atzmaut: Israel's Independence Day, May 14–15, 1948 (5 Iyar in the Jewish calendar).

Yom Rishon (lit. first day), Sunday

yom rishon, yom sheni (lit. first day, second day): Sunday, Monday

Yom Tov (lit. good day), a Holy Day

Yosef, Rabbi Ovadia (1920–): noted Iraqi-born halakhic scholar and former Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel (elected in 1973), and spiritual head of the Shas political party. He has been called "Posek haDor" and "Gadol haDor."

zeide (Yiddish), grandfather

Zionist: one who believes in the reestablishment of the Jewish people in historic Palestine.

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